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F. H. BRADLEY

By

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PREFACE

FRANCIS HERBERT BRADLEY was widely recognized in his lifetime as one of the most acute, original and challenging of English philosophers. He died a quarter of a century ago, and philosophy has since moved in other directions; but there is no philosophic writer today who has not been influenced directly or indirectly by Bradley.

To understand him, it is essential to remember that in his view nothing can be known save in relation to everything else. No tree can be known apart from the wood, though without any one of its trees the wood could not exist. Bradley himself, therefore, like any other philosopher for that matter, can only be understood if we take into account the whole course of philosophy as his background, and are prepared, since he was deeply interested also in religion, to go farther still. But it would be foolish or cowardly to be frightened away from the attempt to become acquainted with Bradley by Bradley's own more ruthless demands. What should be possible, and what I have attempted, is to consider his chief writings in some detail, especially as they touch, whether in amity or opposition, on other work dealing with his subjects. I have not treated these contacts at any great length. This book is not a history of Western philosophy. I have not tried to carry farther the minute and to some minds fascinating discussion of certain technical aspects of Bradley's philosophy that we owe to James Ward, for example, and to Mr. R. W. Church.

To my mind, no one has been more determined than Bradley in the pursuit of philosophy as a way, not of disputing, but of living. I have therefore endeavoured, not indeed to produce a biographical sketch—materials for

such a work are regrettably scanty—but to lead the reader to think of him as a living person rather than as the author of certain books and articles; and if he should protest at such treatment, he would himself reveal, as he often did, behind the writer, the man.

In going thus some little way to answer the question, ‘Who was the real Bradley?’ I have used also the less familiar parts of his work. Nothing that he wrote can be safely neglected; and in one direction I have gone farther than perhaps many students of Bradley would approve. I have given special attention to his references to religion, and to the contrast, more apparent, as I believe, than real, between the conviction that underlies his system and the faith in which he had been brought up. Such a discussion leads to some of the most fundamental questions that can meet us when we consider the relation of God to man, and suggests that when we view, steadily and whole, the philosophic structure that Bradley has reared, we shall be led to think that *no philosopher has rendered a greater service than Bradley has done, albeit, at least in part, unconsciously, to the cause of religious faith.*

W. F. L.

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The following abbreviations of books by F. H. Bradley are used in the footnotes through the book:

P.H.: *Presuppositions of Critical History* (Oxford 1874).

E.S.: *Ethical Studies* (1st Ed., London 1876, 2nd Ed., Clarendon Press, 1927).

P.L.: *Principles of Logic* (1st Ed., London 1883, 2nd Ed., 2 Vols., with Commentary and Terminal Essays, London 1922).

A. and R.: *Appearance and Reality* (1st Ed., London 1893, 2nd Ed., 1897; 1b., 4th Impression, 1906).

E.T.R.: *Essays on Truth and Reality* (Oxford 1914).

C.E.: *Collected Essays* (2 vols., Oxford 1935).

The references in the following pages are to *E.S.* (1927), *P.L.* (1922), and *A. and R.* (1906).

Where numbers are enclosed in brackets, with no further reference, they indicate quotations, in Chapter Three, from *C.E.*; in Chapter Four, from *E.S.*; in Chapter Five, from *P.L.*; and in Chapters Six to Eleven, from *A. and R.*

All italics in quotations belong to the authors.

CHAPTER ONE

IN SEARCH OF REALITY

BRADLEY'S PLACE AS A PHILOSOPHER

THERE is always a deep and rare satisfaction in the study of a single man or of a single work of art that is of true eminence. . . . There is that in the work of such a man which, at each new contact, both refreshes and enkindles the imagination.' These words, with which Dr. E. Allison Peers began his Bede Lecture on St. John of the Cross (1932), may fittingly be applied to F. H. Bradley. That Bradley was a philosopher of 'true eminence' few students of the course of human thought would deny. None of his admirers would claim for him a place among 'the heights and pinnacles of human mind', or rank him with Plato or Spinoza, Leibnitz or Kant. He would certainly have made no such claim for himself. His importance flows from the fact that, first, he has given a definite and challenging expression of his own to that wide philosophic view which, if we care to run the risk of affixing a label, we may call idealism, though we might equally well call it realism; and, secondly, that he has forced subsequent thinkers, at least in this country, to take account of his position in advancing to their own. This he has done by means of a singular mixture of positive and often dogmatic conviction with surprising readiness to reconsider his own conclusions and retrace his own steps. No thinker could render a greater service to the world. There have been schools, and periods, in which an Aristotle, a Locke, or a Hegel, have been venerated as theologians have venerated the words of Holy Writ and as some today venerate the profundities

and ingenuities of Aquinas. The wiser among us look back to the older masters, not in order to repeat their teaching in a new language, but, as they themselves would desire, aware of the continuity and expansion of thought from age to age, to mould their philosophical descriptions of man and the universe into a shape more adequate and satisfying for our own time.

PHILOSOPHY NOT YET SUPERSEDED BY SCIENCE

Today, such attempts at philosophical description are under a cloud. In magazines and newspapers, in the common talk of men, in commerce and industry, and even in the universities, it is from science that guidance and illumination are sought. Bertrand Russell has remarked that England is the home of the clearest philosophers and of general contempt for philosophy. Science has transformed the world. It has exhibited a steady and a startling progress which, absent from all the rest of human affairs, has moved from one assured position to another, with its spectacular discoveries in medicine, chemistry, electricity, and their no less spectacular applications. Science has created the fabric of the life of today; and science may destroy it tomorrow. What have philosophers done, men ask, to assuage the pangs of cancer, or to show how to bear them patiently? Science has multiplied our food stocks, healed our diseases, carried our words at lightning speed over the globe, and bestowed on us an empire over the world around us that leaves the primal blessing of the creation no better than the ignorant dreams of a child. Why waste time in futile meditations in the study when the laboratories of the chemist, the physicist and the biologist are waiting to reveal to us the last, the most fruitful, and the most fatal, of the secrets of nature?

Yet we cannot escape from philosophy; and in a sense all of us philosophize, whether we know it or not. For

human life is more than the supply of our wants, or the search for our satisfactions. From the first moment of its little life, the infant

*gathers much
And learns the use of 'I' and 'me',
And finds 'I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch'.*

The very dawn of history found men at the approach of death asking the question to which the scientific achievements of the most accomplished of their descendants could give them no answer; and in their pathetic little graves, marvellously preserved through thousands of years, we can see how they prepared their dead for the journey to the distant bourne. Men are formed to think, to surmise, whether they live in the caves of the Dordogne, or build the sky-scrapers of some Atlantic city. The sheer facts of life and death, pleasure and misery, success and failure, force the questions on us. They have been expressed in a hundred groping and fanciful ways. Yet all of them can be reduced to two. Whether, in the years to come, we can obtain everything we want by pressing a button and turning a switch, or are driven to burrow far beneath the surface of the earth to escape the nameless perils in the air which we have devised for ourselves, we shall still be asking what is the truth about the world in which we live, and who we are and why we are here.

THE BEGINNINGS OF PHILOSOPHY—PLATO

The wistful longing to find an answer can be felt in the broodings of the earliest Indian thinkers, to whom the universe was either one vast illusion, or *Maya*; or a dualism of the self and the not-self; or a huge formless being out of which all appearance and existence proceeded, and of which we could equally well affirm that it is, and it is not. The underlying melancholy of the Homeric poems,

and the ballads and folk-songs which reflect a far more primitive type of thought and feeling, bear witness to the same uncertainty and restlessness of mind. Question and answer are always beginning afresh. The first Greek philosophers asked, What can we know of the world in which we live? Their answers seem to us mere guesswork; but they resulted from a life-time of consideration. The principle of all things, they said, with Thales in the sixth century, is water, or, with Anaximenes, it is air; or, with Heraclitus, it is compact of endless strife and conflict; or, with Anaxagoras, of mind and purpose. But all this seemed to lead nowhere. What of ourselves, and the things we talk of, admire, aim at, worship? Did we make them, dream them, or were they before we were—courage, beauty, holiness, justice, truth? Did some God bring them to being, or did they somehow make God? Or, to put it in another way, is change inevitable in all existence, or is it only phenomenal, and does what exists in the true sense, reality in fact, remain unchangeable? Or again, is reality one or many? And if there are many reals, how are they held together, and what have they in common?

Such a method of interrogating our own minds, begun by Socrates at the end of the fifth century, led on to Plato, who laid down the fundamental proposition that reality, however it is understood, lies behind and above the manifestations of our senses, in which change and therefore uncertainty is inherent, and that from our individual consciousness, when we reflect on it, we are led to a reality that is trans-subjective. This was further developed, especially by Aristotle, in the conclusion that this pure being, which is also of necessity free and unmixed activity, is not entirely removed from our conscious existence or even from the things around us; it is the end of all their change and growth, moves within them, draws them, as by some divine attraction. Reality and what men call God are thus felt to be one and the same thing; a

conclusion which, in some form or other, philosophy has always tended to reassert. To quote R. G. Collingwood: 'There is such a thing as the tradition of philosophy, to be discovered by historical study, and this tradition has been going on sound lines, and been appreciated by philosophical criticism.'¹

NEO-PLATONISTS AND CHRISTIANS

Naturally, it has encountered violent opponents. Half a century before Plato, Democritus was upholding a curious anticipation of the modern atomic theory, which, while asserting a kind of 'matter' quite beyond our senses, got rid of the non-material reality altogether. Other schools carried forward the Platonic conception, sometimes to fantastic lengths; or identified God, the Maker and Lord of the universe, with a kind of rarefied matter; or, in the spirit of what we should now call agnosticism, doubted whether, if the real existed, we could know anything about it, and asked if we could even know that it existed. When the Christians began to philosophize, they were attracted, as might have been expected, to Plato, and found the one unchanging deity coming very near to their own conception of God. When philosophy awoke again from the long sleep of the dark ages, its allegiance to Plato became divided with a fresh allegiance to Aristotle, of whom the schoolmen, while they still knew but little Greek, had learnt from the Arab philosophers. They regarded him with a reverence almost equal to that which they accorded to the Christian fathers and the Bible; and while they hotly disputed whether general classes (horse or man, for example, as against Bucephalus or Socrates) had an independent existence, or were only names on the lips or ideas in the mind, they were generally agreed that what we call God is pure and immutable being, who is also the good, and who, as the cause and ground and, as

¹ *Essay on Philosophical Method* (1933), p. 226.

they for their part firmly added, the creator of all things, draws all things to himself as their appointed end and pattern.

FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO KANT

The universe of the middle ages was no larger than that of the Greeks; but with the great discoveries that preceded the Renaissance, thought was compelled to change its centre of gravity. The knowledge of the natural world and the methods of investigating it, all, in fact, that we now call science, could be no longer left out of account. Instead of one real being, or cause of being, men found themselves faced by two, mind and matter. As Descartes put it, in the seventeenth century, whatever else I doubt, I cannot doubt that I think; that I have a mind; nor can I doubt that I live in a world which does not think, a world of matter. What is the relation between the two? Is there any point at which they join, such (to mention his own conjecture) as the pineal gland in the human brain? Spinoza boldly fell back on the idea of substance, in the sense of that which underlies all else, of which both extension, at the basis of what we call matter, and thought, at the basis of mind, are modes. Leibnitz held that the world is made up of monads, the impenetrable units of which all things consist; and that these are held together, in all their innumerable interactions, by a harmony ordained and established by God.

But this question of the relation of mind to matter inevitably aroused another. If matter is thus quite distinct from mind, how can it be known at all? This in turn led to three types of discussion: epistemological—what constitutes knowledge? psychological—how do we come to know or think that we know what actually goes on in our minds? and teleological—what do we or should we aim at in this material world in which we live? English thinkers, with characteristic suspicion of any attempt to

elaborate a theoretical system, were interested rather in the means of extending knowledge and in determining the distinction between the true and the false, and so for the most part contented themselves by detailing the various ways in which the mind worked up or associated the ideas which it had gained from the senses. They arranged themselves for the most part into two fairly distinct groups, of which Hume and Reid might be called the sponsors. The former were convinced that there was nothing in the mind which had not been in the sense or received through it; that the ideas indeed were copies more or less accurate of what was in the world outside; nor were they deterred by the difficulty of deciding how the accuracy of such copies could be assessed. The latter, amending the maxim by adding the clause 'except the mind itself', found, as Hume professed himself quite unable to find, certain elements involved in sense experience, but not derived from it, which reason itself forbade them either to expel or to doubt.

At the end of the eighteenth century, however, Kant, the most significant name in modern philosophy, denied that we could, by any manipulation of what our senses give us, reach reality, the thing, or sum of things, as it is in itself. He held that the mind is so formed as to attain to what may serve as knowledge; reason is not merely reasoning; it is the movement of mind according to a given scheme; and it is within that scheme that truth must be sought. Lest, however, we should reply, 'but this is after all no better than surmise', he bids us listen to the voice of this reason within ourselves, and we shall then hear a clear command of duty, the 'categorical imperative', which, when we reflect on it, will assure us of our freedom, our immortality, and the existence of a gracious and beneficent God.

KANTIANS AND ENGLISH THOUGHT

Kant has left his mark on every school of thought, even where his conclusions have been most vigorously attacked. In the first half of the nineteenth century, he dominated German philosophy. But he did not succeed in holding his followers within his own somewhat narrow limits. Was the thing in itself really unknowable? Could not the mind somehow assure itself of its nature and character? Yes, replied Fichte, through the self, the 'I', its will, its activity. Yes, replied Schelling, through the vast organic life of the universe around us. Yes, replied Hegel, through the essential nature of thought or spirit (the word he used, *Geist*, means both, and more), which we can detect in our own processes of thought, and which we are thus enabled to discover in the world of events, of change, of growth around us, mounting to the conception of a universal thought or spirit which moves through all things and holds all things together in one great being or reality; and this leads, in Hegel's phrase, to the identification of the real and the rational.

As the century moved on, Kant's doctrines were further developed or modified by his followers. With Schopenhauer, half echoing Fichte, they emphasized the will as the central point of our consciousness; but, unlike Fichte, found it hopelessly at odds with its environment. Lotze, beginning his best work in the middle of the nineteenth century, recalled the Aristotelian distinction between matter and form, and also the importance, in the world of being, of value. It was at this time that the study of Kant found its way to this country, though the first translation of Kant appeared in English in 1819, fifteen years after his death. It was accompanied by a growing interest in Hegel. When the Germans were first seriously talked of, English thought was in the main what it had been in the eighteenth century, and what it never

wholly ceased to be. Ideas are copies in the mind of what the mind receives through the senses from the outside. Knowledge is simply the combining of the ideas by association; and as for conduct, in spite of all our high-sounding phrases, it is guided by the desire for pleasure and the fear of pain, our own and perhaps that of others. There had been, it is true, a notable group of thinkers at Cambridge in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who gave themselves to the study of Plato, and protested that the principles of right, of truth and beauty were unchanging, and could be reached, through the fitting discipline, by the mind; but these Cambridge Platonists did little to diminish the sway of the ruling English system, which led to an agnosticism a good deal more bleak and forbidding than that of Kant. Curiously enough, the first effect of Kantian studies in England was to underline this agnosticism. It was indeed welcomed by some theologians; if we cannot know the thing in itself, or, as the Christian would prefer to say, him who exists in himself, the greater the need for faith and its response to revelation.

THE ENGLISH NEO-KANTIANIS

This, however, was not the side of Kant's system which appealed to the better known of his English exponents, T. H. Green and those who gathered round him. By a change of emphasis, Green argued that what seemed agnosticism was really the pathway to knowledge, all the knowledge that a thoughtful mind could wish to claim, and no more. He started, with Kant, from the individual consciousness; this, he urged, implies a universal consciousness, which, as universal, is also spiritual; our own conceptions of the world, of duty and of society, point to something which is beyond them, but by which they are vitalized. Thus, the ethical problems which were never absent from the mind of English thinkers, now

led them straight to the discussion of the relation between knowing and being. If Kant had said that our English Hume had awakened him from his dogmatic slumbers, Green, in his Introduction to Hume's *Essays on Human Nature*, devoted some of his best work to a refutation of all that Hume had stood for.

Green was the centre of a band of teachers, notably William Wallace, Bernard Bosanquet, and Edward Caird, who worked, like himself, in Oxford in the 70's and afterwards, and who set the tone for most of the philosophical teaching in this country for more than a generation. They have often been called Neo-Kantians. Labels must always be used, and looked at, with suspicion; they can cover a multitude of different and even discordant meanings. But to call Green and his friends Neo-Kantians means that they interpreted Kant in the light of Hegel. For if being, the thing in itself, must for ever remain unknown to us, we can yet approach it by way of the pattern of our thinking which Kant's analysis had foreshadowed; and indeed, when we inspect our mental life, we find that we can only explain it by supposing that there is some noumenal or spiritual existence which, in the well-known phrase of Aquinas, is 'what we call God'.

But can we stop here? Must we conclude that an impenetrable veil separates us from real and permanent existence? Kant himself had said that the understanding makes nature. When we go on with our analysis of the way in which the mind sets itself to comprehend and synthesize all its knowledge, we find ourselves, so argued the Neo-Kantians, in the presence of a spiritual reality which reproduces, on a vaster scale, what the mind has revealed by its own working, positing, opposing, uniting its ideas; a process that is seen in all human society and its institutions, as we understand them, and even in the world-wide processes of nature around us; it is the very life of all that we are aware of; it sums up the complex

of what we call things into an all-embracing rational whole. Once more, the real is the rational, the rational is the real; being and thought are one and the same; not, be it noted, that this involves the identity of our own thought with the things around us, or even with ourselves; but when we pierce to the centre of being, we come upon what can only be called thought, or reason, or spirit, the knowledge of which must start from the analysis of thought within ourselves.

BRADLEY

This brings us to Bradley. We might think of it as leading us back to Plato. Whitehead, the profoundest of thinkers of our own day, has declared that all European philosophy reads like a series of annotations to Plato, and in Plato the Neo-Kantians were steeped. All thought, as Hegel contended, returns upon itself, but in a spiral movement; it comes round to the same point, but, as it were, higher up. The Neo-Kantians expressed what Plato might have said if he had known all that would be brought forward by his followers and his critics in the next two thousand years. But Bradley was at once more and less than a Neo-Kantian. Trained in the same school as they, moving in their intellectual atmosphere, he applied himself with yet more single-minded concentration to the problems of the relation of conduct and knowledge to being, and the significance of the one, the all, the real; and all this in the 'conviction that the nature or reality of things, facts, and phenomena, reveals itself in their "together" and not in their artificial isolation . . . the comprehensiveness and individuality of one Absolute'.²

When the interest of Green and others turned to practical applications of this theory, Bradley remained anchored to the speculative; when they reached a position which they were satisfied to defend and expound, he never

² J. T. Merz, *History of European Philosophy*, Vol. XI, p. 528.

ceased to criticize his opponents and himself. Kant had been called the '*Alles-zermalmende*', crushing to bits everything that before him had seemed solid; Bradley's criticism, to many of his own contemporaries, seemed equally devastating. But he knew, with Plato, that the life which refuses to be examined and criticized, is no life at all. The main rôle of philosophy, he said more than once, is scepticism; calling in question all that is regarded as settled. True to this principle, he continually re-examined his own conclusions, and his critics found that they were supplied from his own armoury with some of their most effective weapons. But the concentration and austerity of his thought, the refusal to rest in any conclusion derived from a partial view of existence, or to be turned from his mark by any consideration of practical well-being, are responsible for his strength and his deficiencies.

In the best known of all his dialogues, Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates an eloquent eulogy on the virtues of astronomy; not, as one of his disciples suggested, because it was useful alike to the general and the husbandman, but because it points to the meaning of order and harmony in the heavens, and the very pattern, unattainable by our senses, of the universe.³ Bradley seems equally remote from the ordinary everyday concerns of men in much of his writing. Those who look for small profits and quick returns will experience nothing but disappointment in him. But if they have ever felt the fascination, the searching solemnity of the two great questions with which we started, who and what I am, and what I can call real and abiding in the world around me, they will find in Bradley one who compels them to think and think again on these high matters, who will forbid them alike the repose of a by-path meadow and a view from the delectable mountains, but will leave them at the last like sober men among dreamers.

³ *Republic*, Book VII, 527, 529.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

This brief preliminary statement of Bradley's place in English thought will serve as the text of the following chapters. The isolation of which we have spoken makes it more necessary with him than with some others to begin with a brief account of his life and its setting in Oxford, from which, after leaving school, he never removed; and of some of the influences which were working in that home of losing and winning causes. We shall then be able to study his work to best advantage, if we take his books in the order in which he produced them, classified, somewhat perfunctorily (for he never closed a door behind him), as his essay on History, and his three treatises on Ethics, Logic, and Metaphysics. All his other published work consists of essays, more or less connected in subject, and contributed for the most part, at regular intervals through his life, to the philosophic journal, *Mind*. Some of them he collected and published later; and it will repay us to notice a few of these separately, in order to see how he was continually reshaping his work. Nothing that he wrote (and he could not be called a voluminous writer) can safely be neglected by the student of his thought. For, with all his positive and often scornful expressions, he was a companion as much as a leader; not a lecturer but a fellow-student.

We are thus brought face to face with the two subjects with which Bradley was dealing throughout his life. The first of these concerns the nature and meaning of being or reality. It was present with him continuously; but actually he did not come to grips with it till the third of his three major works, *Appearance and Reality*. The second subject, the effect of his conclusions on religion, he chose to keep in the background. But it is possible, as we shall find reason for surmising, that this fact does not express his real view of its importance. Most of those who read

this book will probable care more about their hold on their faith than about any philosophic system. The discussion of these two subjects will therefore be constantly before us in the succeeding pages; and it will not be amiss if, before going farther, we cast a kind of Pisgah glance over them from the view-point to which Bradley would lead us.

THE MEANING OF EXISTENCE

First, then, as regards the term being; the word which has illuminated or haunted philosophy from Plato onward. Inevitably it suggests the problem of materialism. Does matter exist? If so, can anything else exist? If matter does not exist, what does? But if matter and matter alone is real, what becomes of our own existence? If both are real, how are they connected in our world? How can either of them be understood save as excluding and denying the other? If mind or spirit alone exists, what becomes of all the objects we see and feel, admire or eat? Is not life reduced to a dream, and a dream that is far from beautiful?

Obviously everything depends on what we mean by existence, being, reality. For the most part, the understanding of these terms has been taken for granted. Our thinkers have attempted to decide the things of which reality can be predicated, rather than the nature and meaning of the reality they predicate of this or that. Most people begin by thinking of reality as the hard or resistant, exhibiting the primary qualities of solidity and extension rather than the secondary qualities of colour, taste, and smell; or else, what is at least relatively constant and enduring. Others, reflecting that change and decay are everywhere, turn to something permanent underneath the flux of the changing, something without which change itself would be impossible, like the sea as distinct from the waves, or the atoms and the intra-atomic nuclei as distinct from their combinations in perceptible objects.

Shall we say that everything is, or exists, of which we are aware, or think that we are aware? Or shall we confine reality, and that which can properly be said to exist, to what lies behind and above the manifold variety of experience?

Now that our modern knowledge of radioactivity has been leading us from Democritus to Heraclitus, and teaching us to regard the nuclei as merely centres of force, we find ourselves asking whether it is force or motion (the means by which we perceive what we call force) that is the ultimately real. On the other hand, since it is only by our minds that we are aware of motion or force, resistance or change or durability or anything else in the world, we may come to think of our minds as alone worthy of being called real—either our own minds, or something that is common to all mind, or functions as its basis. Having once begun to look for reality within our own consciousness, we may feel that what is real for us, what we cannot escape from, is value, either in the concrete, the object of our wise or ignorant aims, or in the abstract, the quality that makes things or experiences valuable or pleasant to us; or again, since everything that exists may be said to exist for us, though not necessarily dependent on us, and since we are not merely centres of consciousness but persons, acting and willing, hating and loving, some would conduct us from values to the thought of a personal source of these values, which would seem to be identifiable with God.

This is not the place to decide between such a babel of claims; they will have to be considered more fully in a later chapter. Meanwhile, it is clear that if these conceptions of reality have anything in common, it is the conviction that what we call real must be durable; and that it is as much inside as outside us;

*All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;*

in fact, we can neither alter it or leave it out of account. The decision is still open to us as to whether there is such a thing, and whether if that be so there are many reals or only one. The idea of several reals, each distinct from the other, seems self-contradictory. There might indeed conceivably be many reals but one quality of reality. But if we regard the real as substance, in the true sense of the word, that which underlies whatever exists as its basis and ground, we must go on to identify the one substance with the one real, whether we regard this as force or spirit. We must also be clear on the distinction between the physical and the mental. This is better expressed by the distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal; that which we experience, directly or indirectly, through the senses, and that which comes before sense experience, and by which the confused data of our senses are worked up into a more or less ordered world of 'things'. Or shall we be safer in starting from our own experiences, as the only things of which we can be sure, and then attempting, with the material which they furnish, however unsatisfactory and ambiguous, to build up our conception of an ordered and integrated universe?

On the other hand, to talk of the physical is to think, sooner or later, of modern physics; and modern physics has led us far away from what our fathers feared, or admired, as materialism. For if matter has now been resolved into centres of force, force itself is something that is experienced by us. Moreover, an earlier generation was content to suppose that the resistance and motion of which we are conscious when we talk of force had their seat in something that could be called matter. In our days the speculations of physics, influenced as they have been by the new relativity and quantum theories, have gone still farther. They have given up the attempt, regarded so hopefully in the past, to draw a picture or

or to give any kind of description of them. Physicists today are concentrating on the idea of structure or pattern, on forms of action rather than on what it is that acts.

A well-informed though not always easy statement of this point of view will be found in Martin Johnson's *Science and the Meanings of Truth* (1946), with its emphasis on the connexion between science and logic, and on 'our later view of physics as pattern without demand to know of what thing we discover the structure'.⁴ But this makes no difference to the philosophical question. We have still to decide, if we can, whether what we understand as real can be predicated of that which comes to us from outside ourselves, or of the consciousness which is aware of what is outside and deals with it, or of something which we may call the Absolute or substance or the universe, which includes both, and from which neither phenomenal nor noumenal can be shut out; as Bradley says, 'a whole in which distinctions can be made, but in which divisions do not exist'.⁵ It was the need for making this decision which was the impulse and the spur of Bradley's life-work.

GOD AND RELIGION

The second point concerns the relation of these investigations to religion. Whether the real or the Absolute can be regarded as one with the divine being who is the object of religion, and more particularly with the God who is worshipped by the Christian, will be considered in more detail in Chapter 8. But some readers may have little patience to wait so long. Why, they will ask, should we spend time in considering good or bad reasons for interpreting the universe in a particular way, or reducing it to a formula? Whatever philosophers may conclude,

⁴ p. 30.

⁵ *A. and R.*, p. 146. (For abbreviations used in footnotes throughout this book, see p. viii, *supra*.)

they will continue, we have to take the world as we find it, to struggle for the good and against the evil in it, and to obey what we know of the will of God. How can this be affected by speculation on the nature or the meaning of reality and the Absolute? Hopes and fears, victory and defeat, exultations and agonies, they will say, we know. It is with these we have to deal. What difference does it make whether some philosopher calls them real or unreal? May we not agree with Wordsworth that it is

*Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know?**

The very form of the question leads to its answer. Life is for all of us a matter of dealing with the outside world, at the bidding of certain impulses, desires, convictions within us. But all this is subject to constant change. At one moment the world outside us is too much for us; it dominates our senses, and our senses sweep us away from any rules of life or action we may have formed. At another the senses themselves seem to reveal another world wherein truth and beauty and love and law are one thing; then, suddenly, this world breaks up and vanishes like a shadow; the very foundations of belief are shaken, and man's unconquerable mind is ravaged by delusion and the sense of sheer impotence.

It is useless to deceive ourselves. We cannot do without some kind of ordered view of the world. We must have some conception of what we are, why we are here, and of what is firm or abiding, without us or within. Assured as we may be of the existence of a personal deity, we must find some way to explain the meaning of such a deity,

* *The River Daffodils*, lxxix, *Afterthoughts*, lxxix.

and the world order issuing from him, in the face of the difficulties of the chaotic world of our experience. Neither the thunders of Mount Sinai nor the darkness of Calvary nor the tidings of the first Easter morning will finally avail, unless we ourselves, our world, and our God, stand together. We cannot do this without travelling along the road which the first part of this chapter has briefly described; and for that road there has been no guide better fitted to set us where we can see the nearer and the more distant prospect than the profound yet elusive thinker who beheld the promised land, but, as he would assure us, was ever in search of it. Let us now go on to make his closer acquaintance.

CHAPTER TWO

BRADLEY AND OXFORD

ESTIMATES OF BRADLEY

IN essentials, Bradley is an effective pioneer of that English philosophy which we hope for, a philosophy distinct and national, not through ignorance of foreign thought but by characteristic appropriation of the world's intellectual inheritance.¹ 'Bradley's work is one of the most brilliant examples of the growing emphasis which is laid on the *esprit d'ensemble*, the synoptic view.'² Rudolph Metz, who spoke of Bradley as 'one of the boldest and most original and speculative thinkers that Britain has produced',³ has written in greater detail: 'Among the representatives of the movement which brought the philosophical systems of Kant and Hegel and other German thinkers into Great Britain, Bradley was the first to strike out a line for himself. Independently he began to mould this mass of new ideas and weld them into a new system of thought which in the history of British philosophy is unique for its daring, forceful energy and verve. . . . He was not the only one who brought about the change in philosophic thought. But it was he who set an example which others followed.'⁴ Long before this, C. F. D'Arcy, in his Donellan Lectures, had spoken of Bradley as 'the most daringly destructive and at the same time the most elaborately constructive of all living philosophers'.⁵ In 1911, Hastings Rashdall, in a paper

¹ Bernard Bosanquet, *Knowledge and Reality* (1885), pp. vi ff.

² J. T. Merz, *loc. cit.*

³ *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy* (1938), p. 326.

⁴ *Research and Progress* (Berlin 1936).

⁵ *Idealism and Theology* (1899).

read before the British Academy, though sharply criticizing Bradley's metaphysics, quotes Edward Caird's verdict on *Appearance and Reality*, 'the greatest thing since Kant'; 'I should say', he adds, 'that there has been nothing greater.'

These views are typical of what has been said of Bradley since the early stages of his work, by admirers and critics alike. On the continent he has been awarded a recognition shared by few of his British contemporaries; and the same may be said of America, though there he has been studied mainly to be confuted. But those who confessed their failure to understand him, and those who found in his main contentions nothing but self-contradiction and error, recognized that it would be folly to forget Bradley. He wielded a rapier rather than a broadsword; but he could be ruthless in his use of it. He forced attention by a persistence which was always saying the same thing, even when it was dealing with different subjects; he compelled other writers, so to speak, to stand and deliver; he set himself to be a demolisher of idols, and he proclaimed what Merz called the doctrine of the 'together' with the intensity of a prophet; 'the foremost figure', as Muirhead called him, in 1924, the year of his death, 'in British philosophy, perhaps in the philosophy of our time in any country, for the last generation.'

EARLY LIFE

It was, however, in no prophetic milieu that his early days were cast. He was born in 1846; his father, the Rev. Charles Bradley, a distinguished adherent of the evangelicalism of the Clapham Sect, was the Vicar of Glasbury, Brecknock, and subsequently became incumbent of St. James, Clapham. Like many of the philosophers of his own and earlier times, Locke, Reid, Darwin, T. H. Green, Edward Caird, Cook Wilson, A. E. Taylor, he was brought up in an atmosphere of deep and somewhat

narrow piety, whose influence, it would seem, he was unable and perhaps unwilling wholly to shake off in later life. He grew up beneath the shadow of the steeple with his two brothers, Andrew, later the Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and John, who was drowned in early manhood, and a sister, Mrs. de Glehn, who outlived him by some fourteen years. George Granville Bradley, the son of an earlier marriage, was successively Headmaster of Marlborough College, Master of University College, Oxford, and Dean of Westminster. After five years at Cheltenham College (1856-61), which had already made a name for itself as one of the great schools of the country, Bradley was removed to be under the charge of his elder brother at Marlborough; here he remained for two years, taking his full share of the school life, studying the classics, playing football, drilling in the school rifle corps, and—a rare occupation for an English schoolboy—reading the most abstruse of Kant's writings, the *Critique of Pure Reason*. At school, however, as all through his life, he suffered from ill health.

He then went up to University College with a scholarship, in 1865. Some years later his brother was called to the same college as Master, to lift the college tone and discipline to the higher level demanded by the rising ideals of the time. The gambling, loose living, and self-indulgence which for the majority of undergraduates had been almost taken for granted, were, though by no means eradicated, on the way to be regarded as bad form. Music and the drama were being cultivated seriously. Inter-collegiate athletics, on the river and the cricket and football fields, were being organized as a part of healthy college life; the over-elaboration of sport was yet to come. The admission of other than Anglicans to the University, which became possible in 1871, was to exercise a salutary though not always recognized influence; later came the permission of marriage to fellows

of colleges, and in 1879 the appearance of women students in two colleges of their own.

In this new Oxford, the young Bradley was well fitted to take his part. Tall and handsome, and with a mixture of daring and sensitive reserve in manner, he held himself well; his carriage was erect and youthful to the end of his life; and the portrait by R. C. Eves in the Common Room at Merton shows the delicacy and mobility of his features. He was healthy enough to row on the river and take long walks. His fellow students saw in him a born leader. His political views were vigorous and, for that period in Oxford, not unpopular. He never, for example, concealed his hatred (had he learnt it at the parsonage at Glasbury?) of Gladstone. He read the ordinary classical course, in which, at Oxford, philosophy was as important as the study of the great Greek and Latin authors; and he attended some of T. H. Green's lectures. He gained a first class in Moderations; but in his final schools his examiners only gave him a second; they had been brought up, said a friend afterwards, in an older school, and they did not or would not recognize the brilliance of his papers. Music he always loved, though there is hardly a reference to it in his writings. A few verse translations have survived from the classics and Goethe and Heine, written between 1865 and 1868. Many subjects which lay apart from his main road beautified and illuminated the landscape through which it ran. But with the moralizing treatises of Tolstoy he had no patience. Equally alien was the bibliolatry of orthodox circles and the humanism which interpreted religion as the service of human wants. He was ready to profess his belief in the Incarnation, though not necessarily in the 'historical' Jesus.

In the year after taking his degree he sat, unsuccessfully, for a fellowship at University College, but in December 1870 was awarded one at Merton. Fellowships in those

days could be held till marriage or death. Bradley never married, and Merton remained his home for fifty-four years, till his death in 1924. The year after his election he suffered from inflammation of the kidneys, which left him always liable to illness after cold or fatigue, driving him at times to the South of England or to France. His life thus became a sedentary one, and, unlike his philosophic contemporaries whom we have named, he never did any teaching or lecturing or tutorial work. Interested as he was in all the affairs of the college, in which his counsel was sought and valued, he did not take an active part, like Green or Bosanquet, in political or social work outside the walls of the University. Apart from conversations in the Merton Common Room and some wider friendships inevitable in a long life in Oxford, he devoted himself to his writing. We can only conjecture by what different characteristics that writing might have been marked if he had been forced, as all the other Oxford thinkers of his time were forced, to make his point of view intelligible to eager and perplexed students in a lecture room or, sitting with them in his study, to disentangle truth from error in their own written work. Rightly or wrongly, the thinker, as distinguished from the preacher or reformer, is always liable to be an object of suspicion; and the man who only 'relates himself to paper', clever as he may be in elaborating a philosophic dialectic, will miss the sympathy and patience and flexibility of thought which springs from contact with an audience that is not imaginary but real.

LITERARY OUTPUT

Ill health could not for him mean indolence. We hardly have to look between the lines of his more considered writing to detect his interest in theology or his sense of religion; and in the earlier years following his election to the Merton Fellowship he was studying the theological

and religious problems first raised by F. C. Baur at Tübingen thirty years before, and later agitating Church circles in this country. His publications begin, in 1874, with a lengthy brochure on *The Presuppositions of Critical History*,⁶ in which it was clear that to the author the nouns existed for the adjective rather than the adjective for the nouns. In 1876 appeared his *Ethical Studies*, which at once attracted wide attention as a spirited attack on the ethical teaching then prevalent in England. (Green's well-known *Prolegomena to Ethics* appeared seven years later.) No second edition was published during his lifetime; but when the work was republished three years after his death, it was found to contain a number of the modifications with which he was constantly retouching his work. A year after its appearance, however, a sort of appendix⁷ followed in the shape of an attack on the Hedonism of Professor Sidgwick, whom he considered the leader of his opponents. In 1883 came the first of his academic honours, the LL.D of Glasgow University, where his friend Edward Caird had been teaching for seventeen years—he was to return to Oxford ten years later. A more important event was the publication, in the same year (1883), of *The Principles of Logic*, which may be said to have created the deeper study of Logic in this country and in America. A second and greatly enlarged edition appeared in 1922, very shortly before his death. In 1883 Bernard Bosanquet published his *Essays in Philosophic Criticism*; to Bosanquet's work, as to his criticisms, Bradley was always ready to accord the most generous praise, especially in the ground covered by the *Principles of Logic*. The next decade saw the publication of a number of essays, chiefly psychological in subject: *Is there any special Activity of Attention?* (1886), *Association and Thought* (1887), *Pleasure, Pain, Desire, and Volition* (1888), etc.

⁶ C.E., Vol. I, 1-70. (See p. viii, *supra*.)

⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 71-128.

In 1887 too was published *Hegelianism and Personality*, by Andrew Seth, subsequently known as A. Pringle-Pattison. Seth had begun his career as a zealous Hegelian, in the steps of Hutchison Stirling; but he had come to feel that the Hegelian Absolute did little justice to the core of our conscious life. This did not leave Bradley's position in his *Ethical Studies* untouched; but it had more to do with the subject of the third work of Bradley's trilogy, *Appearance and Reality*, published in 1893 (a second edition following in 1897). The essays that Bradley then wrote showed that his mind was still busy with psychology and logic; for example, *On the Contrary and the Disparate* (1896), *Some Remarks on Memory and Inference* (1899), *A Defence of Phenomenalism in Psychology* (1900), essays on the Will* (1902-4), *On Truth and Practice* (1904), and *On Truth and Copying* (1907). A paper on *The Ambiguity of Pragmatism*, 1908, was one of a number in which Bradley set himself to expose what he felt to be the fascinating but deplorable philosophy of William James of Harvard, popularized in Oxford by F. C. S. Schiller, whose *Humanism* appeared in 1903. Bradley collected a number of his essays in a volume which he named *Essays on Truth and Reality*, and published in 1914. After this, his pen was less active; he appears to have written nothing save a fragment on Relations, at the close of his life, in 1924.

He had to wait for several years for honours from abroad. In 1921 he was made a member of the Royal Danish Academy; in 1922, of the Accademia dei Lincei; in 1923, of the Reale Istituto Lombardo at Milan. In the same year he was elected an Honorary Fellow of the British Academy, at the request of his friend Bosanquet; and in 1924, just before his death, he was awarded the Order of Merit, rarely bestowed (such is our English way) on a philosopher.

In September of that year he was taken ill, and after

buried in Holywell Churchyard in Oxford; in the grave where his brother John, who had been drowned in 1866, just before taking up his residence as a scholar of New College, had been laid to rest. Three years later, as has been mentioned, the second edition of *Ethical Studies* appeared; it had been long out of print, and latterly was but little known. In 1935 came two volumes of *Collected Essays*; most of these essays had been previously published, but were either out of print or scattered in various periodicals, chiefly *Mind*.

OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Such is the bare record of his life. No memoir of Bradley was ever written. He left no such materials as might have produced a worthy companion to the memoir of T. H. Green prefixed to the third volume of his works by R. L. Nettleship, or John Laird's memoir of Samuel Alexander in Alexander's *Philosophical and Literary Pieces* (1939). For most of the particulars in the preceding paragraphs we are indebted to the notices written by his friend and admirer, Professor A. E. Taylor, in *Mind* (1925), the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and the *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1924-5). No life could well have seemed more uneventful. But every man has his own world, and no man's work can be separated from his life. The portrait painter has to choose whether to give his subject a background that will suggest his interests, his home, and his surroundings, or to allow nothing on his canvas that will compete with the figure itself. The writer who attempts any kind of biographical analysis has no choice. The more we know of the influences and ideas in the midst of which a man grows up, the better our chance of knowing the man. Least of all would Bradley have allowed us to forget this. One of his later essays was entitled: *Who was the Real Julius Caesar?* His answer was that the reality of Caesar was to be found

wherever his influence worked, in the present as much as in the distant past;⁸ and, we should surely have to add, wherever the influences were that worked upon him and made him or helped to make him what he became. At all events, we are a part of what we receive, and what we receive is part of us. Indeed, to write a complete account of anyone would be to write an account of his society, and ultimately of the universe. It will be enough for us to try to picture Bradley's world in a narrower sense.

When, two years after leaving Marlborough, he found himself in Oxford, that city had long been the home of theological orthodoxy and sound churchmanship. It had equally little patience for Locke and for Shelley. The great continental movements of thought in the eighteenth century flowed past its colleges and professorial lecture rooms; and when German transcendental philosophy was exciting the admirers of Carlyle, it gained some slight toleration in Oxford only because of its supposed support of religious faith. Aristotle was still studied, but chiefly as the master of logic. Gibbon's round accusation of intellectual torpor can hardly be sustained, indeed, even for the University of his own day. The scholasticism which reigned in Oxford demanded learning and industry. But the achievements and promises of science were met with a superior indifference. The philosophy, to give it the name which no one then disputed, born of the remarkable advance in industry in the first half of the century, and expanded in the rationalism and empiricism of Bentham and J. S. Mill and Alexander Bain, entered through an open door; but it entered from the outside.

The change in the middle of the nineteenth century might be expressed by saying that the intellectual centre of gravity shifted from the Common Room at Oriel to the Common Room at Balliol. Oriel, when the Tractarian Movement was beginning to agitate Oxford, was led by

Whately, Copleston, Keble, Thomas Arnold. Balliol, when philosophy gradually replaced theology as the more authentic voice of Oxford, was represented by Jowett and T. H. Green. Oriel stood for precise thinking, exact logic; suspicion of all that was not rooted in an English and academic past. Balliol was to stand for eager speculation, sympathy with outside intellectual movements, and a training that should fit men for wedding contemplation to the needs and ends of practical life, criticism to construction. The Oxford of Oriel was relied on as the bulwark of tradition; the Oxford of Balliol was feared, or hated, as the mother of innovation. Though himself a Balliol undergraduate, Matthew Arnold, as became his father's son, was looking to Oriel rather than to Balliol when he saw through the mists of his professional drudgery the 'sweet city with her dreaming spires'; but he had to shut his eyes to the fact that his father had come away from Oriel to do for the Public Schools what Jowett was soon to do for the University itself.

Mark Pattison, a conspicuous member of the band of Oxford innovators, in an article on Philosophy in Oxford, printed in *Mind* (1876), described the second quarter of the century in Oxford as shaken out of its old self-assured intellectualism into a new and unstable intellectualism, shot through with discussion, by the Tractarian Movement; and passing, in the third quarter, into a new era not of discussion but of controversy. By that time the premier school of *Literae Humaniores* had been transformed under the inspiration mainly of Jowett of Balliol into 'Greats', the study of ethics, political philosophy, and economics, based on an exigent discipline in the classical texts of historians and philosophers. Pattison complained that the school was in the hands of tutors who began to teach too early; that no one went to the professors, and that philosophy, ceasing to arouse wonder or even curiosity, had become a matter of memory; a strange

verdict on a generation which saw Jowett's translation of Plato, Green's examination of Hume, and, later, Wallace's *Prolegomena to the Logic of Hegel*. Henry Sidgwick, writing in the same year on Philosophy at Cambridge, the University of Newton and Whewell, remarked that the philosophy which was at home in Cambridge was 'natural philosophy', which meant what we now understand by science, recently enlarged by 'mental and moral philosophy'; these however were the Cinderellas of the family, doomed to wait in vain for the fairy prince. The teachers knew that their lectures had to 'pay'; that is, to get their hearers through the tripos. Nor had anyone a better right to make this criticism than Sidgwick, for to him belongs the honour of being the first in the line of the great Cambridge philosophers of our days; though his views did not succeed in travelling from the Cam to the Isis.

OXFORD IDEALISM AND CRITICISM

Mark Pattison was not wholly wrong in making the distinction between discussion and controversy. Those who introduced German philosophy into Oxford, following on the publication of J. H. Hutchison Stirling's *Secret of Hegel* in 1865, were not controversialists by nature or temperament; but they found themselves the centres of controversy in spite of themselves. Interpreting the critical agnosticism of Kant by the more positive speculations of Hegel, but never forgetting Kant himself, they were compelled, as it seemed, to fall foul of all that was regarded as orthodox or traditional or accepted. The universe they regarded as spiritual; that is, as a whole wherein every part was organically and essentially connected with every other part; and where matter, hard and resistant and irrational, could have no place; where the individual could not be thought of as an end in himself, apart from society in the broadest sense; and where institutions could only justify themselves as the

manifestations of spirit. If this was correct, the pretensions of science, or its exponents, to explain life were untenable; the belief in progress as an ever-widening realm of human comforts was fallacious; any system of ethics or economics based on the pleasure or happiness of the individual, or content to aim at it, was untrue to the real nature of man. Even the Church as the divinely appointed teacher of faith and morals had to look to its defences. Small wonder if to be understood to lean to German thought was to be credited with all the audacious German theories which were held, by those who did not always trouble to understand them, to be subversive of sober English ways of life.

The public of the later years of the century had no conception of the significance of the revolutionary Hegelian Karl Marx. Of the startling application of Hegelianism in the Communist Manifesto, published in 1848, the Oxford philosophers themselves knew nothing. Nor did anyone make the mistake of suspecting Hegel as the author of the glorification of the State which was to lead to 'Prussianism' and to Hitler. Such an aim could have been found with more justification in Fichte; but Fichte was unknown outside Oxford; and in Oxford he was known for other aspects of his thought. Still, it was not without reason that the Germans, and more particularly Hegel and his followers, were feared, and feared as enemies of religion. For they had made their way into theology; their study of the books of the Bible and of Church history had led to what was generally known and feared as 'criticism'. Inspired by the idea of spiritual evolution, of the dialectical movement of thought through antithesis, or contradiction, to synthesis, they threw doubt on the finality of the accepted views of sacred literature and history. Worse than that, their idea of the spiritual unity of the universe as one organic whole, left the orthodox reader wondering what was the place of God in

relation to the Absolute, and how evil was to be condemned or banished from a world in whose hospitable soil any weed had its tolerated place. The consternation with which such questions were asked can be seen in the pages of *Robert Elsmere*, written by Matthew Arnold's niece in 1886; Gray, whose insidious philosophy ruined the faith of an eager young clergyman, was held to be a representation of T. H. Green, whose deity, A. E. Taylor once remarked, was 'an only half-baptized Aristotelian God'.

THEIR POSITIVE SIGNIFICANCE

Such fears, as often happens, were exaggerated. True, neither Jowett nor Green would have claimed to be orthodox. They held neither the Catholic view of the Church, nor the Evangelical view of the Atonement, nor the belief, common at that time to both parties in the Church, in the verbal inspiration of Scripture. Jowett, as a clergyman, was open to deeper suspicion than his lay colleague, Green. But the young authors of *Essays and Reviews*,⁹ among whom, along with Jowett, was Frederick Temple, destined, like his son, one of the authors of *Foundations* (1912), to the chair of Augustine, would today impress anyone who troubled to read them, more by their positive convictions than their sceptical hints. Wallace and the two Cairds were certainly Christians, and Bosanquet, if he did not share their faith, led the way to an active service of the needs of men which many Christians became eager to follow. They felt themselves to be prophets as much as critics; and while they acknowledged their debt to their German teachers, they stood for a spiritual interpretation of life against its detractors in their own day; an interpretation which they felt, rightly or wrongly, the Church had not been equipped adequately to enforce.

Properly speaking, they were not a school or a group, even in the limited sense in which we can speak of the Cambridge Platonists or the Lake Poets or the Pre-Raphaelite school of painters. They did not exist to enforce or expound any one set of doctrines. But there were certain convictions which they held in common, and whose source they found in the German thinkers of the beginning of the century. Some of them moved away from their earlier positions. Each of them felt free to express his difference from the rest. But they founded a tradition which moulded the thought of Oxford for a generation and more; and that tradition, however neglected and repudiated since, has left an indelible mark on the English philosophy of today.

BRADLEY IN OXFORD

Such was the atmosphere in which the young Bradley found himself at Oxford. As his friends have told us, he was by nature the opposite of a recluse. He was ready for the whole varied life of the University, giving himself equally to what Plato called music and gymnastic, the intellectual and the physical. Nor did he school himself to preserve the attitude of philosophic calm. His was 'the critic clearness of an eye that saw through all the Muses' walk'; nor was there ever 'villain fancy fleeting by'. On the other hand, he was never anxious to restrain his feelings. None of his contemporaries revealed the same powers of sarcasm, of irony, of scornfulness; as none of them reached the heights of eloquence which on occasion surprise and delight us. He wrote at times as if he meant to make enemies; but no one was more eager to effect a reconciliation. It is significant that James Ward, for many years the editor of *Mind*, although he had continually crossed swords with Bradley, was anxious that the second volume of *Contemporary British Philosophy* should be dedicated to him.

What he might have accomplished, but for his life-long ill health, in a more active sphere, we can only guess. The shrewd interst which he took in college business suggests that he might have mixed to some purpose in public life. But debarred as he was even from tutorial work by the 'bridle of Theages', the only alternative left to him was writing. From the beginning, however, the writer was more than a writer. He did not follow the example of Plato in giving his work the actual form of dialogue; and Plato himself, who held that conversation was a far surer method of instruction than either lectures or books, allowed the reporting of conversations, real or supposed, to take a smaller and smaller place in his dialogues. But in his own writing the dramatist is constantly breaking in.

- ✓ He deals with the objector as often as with the objection; sometimes, as in his first published essay, with a freedom of expression as vigorous as it is colloquial. Or, as if not unmindful of St. Paul's habit in the controversial sections of his epistles, he addresses the reader provocatively as 'you', and allows him to reply, with a Roland for his own Oliver. With him, indeed, the connexion between dialogue and dialectic was more than a paronomastic accident. If the function of dialectic is to set two apparent contradictories at one another and leave them to fight it out or to effect a reconciliation, dialogue is the aptest means to secure the kind of controversy wherein the hostility of opinions can be overcome by the underlying human sympathies of their champions. Bradley himself always took the field as a champion; and he would give his opponent, while not as yet unhorsed, no respite. But he was at heart the champion of truth, with a chivalry which bade him be ready to yield a point or, if need be, to confess himself in error. If he had chosen, like the Italian humanist Campanella, to express his philosophy in a sonnet series, it would surely have been describable

in the words Addington Symonds used for Campanella's sonnets; 'brusque, violent in transition, leaping from the sublime to the ridiculous, yet charged with the infinity of its feeling, the energy and audacity of its expression'.

THE CHAMPION OF 'WHOLENESS'

It was said of the younger Brutus, 'he may not know what he wants, but whatever he wants, he wants it badly'. So, it might seem, of Bradley, with his eagerness and his hesitations. His very eagerness at times seemed to spring from his hesitation. But it is not difficult to detect a unity of purpose beneath all that he so passionately and often so obscurely asserted and denied. We may recall the quotations from Merz in the last chapter.¹⁰ It was the conviction that everything must be understood by reference to everything else, that the parts are unintelligible without the whole, that the whole, as not merely the sum but the integration of its parts, can never be completely grasped by us, and yet that only as we approach it can we approach either truth or reality, or escape the ruin (a favourite word of his) which lies in wait for intellectual indolence or pride. That the whole cannot be understood without the parts or the parts without the whole does not sound very novel. It gives us the familiar conception of the organization of the body and its limbs and functions which St. Paul had long ago applied to his doctrine of the living Church. It takes us farther back: to Plato's embodiment of ideal, political, and social justice, according to which each has his part to play, not only for, but in and through the community, and where it is the business of the community to enable him to do so. It is the doctrine of order and degree, not to be disturbed save at dire peril, which finds its well-known expression in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*:¹¹

¹⁰ Page 11, *supra*.

¹¹ Act I, Scene 3.

*' Take but degree away, untune that string,
And, hark! what discord follows; each thing meets
In mere oppugnancy.*

It is reflected in the medieval study of the heavens (perhaps not wholly out of date in our modern astronomy) when each planet

*with undiscording voice
May rightly answer that melodious noise*

of the whole choir. It meets us in the realm of art, whether we are considering an individual picture, in which, to quote Professor Bodkin, 'all must be welded and woven into an harmonious whole before the picture emerges from its constituent elements';¹² or whether, contemplating the development of art in general, we are bidden by Epstein 'to learn to think in terms of art as a continuous unbroken whole'.¹³ We might naturally quote Wordsworth's famous lines,

*A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things,*

as a poetic formulation of the principle which led to the Kantian doctrines of the regulative and the constitutive reason. These doctrines have their ethical and aesthetic application. But they contain within themselves a vigour that transcends medieval and romantic schemes of the universe and of human life.

The contribution of Bradley lay in his expressing that vigour still more seriously and insisting on a unity in which all the particulars should be taken into account, a whole from which nothing should be left excluded; arguing further that while nothing is real save this complete totality, the totality itself, and not merely our

¹² *The Approach to Painting* (1945).

¹³ 77

knowledge of it, begins in experience; and that in this totality not only is there and must there be room for all the emotional and volitional elements in our life, for all our wonder, admiration, and adoration, but even for error, evil, and sin; these, however, are transformed, disinfected as it were, when recognized, like all else, as changing parts of the eternal and unchanging whole. It may be, as we shall see reason to surmise, that Bradley did not carry his own contentions to their legitimate conclusion; but the eagle's flight is necessary, if the wren in the fable is to rise still higher.

COLERIDGE

Was this conception moving in Bradley's mind, like the embryo within the womb, from the beginning? We can only conjecture. But the boy who read Kant at school, and who absorbed the English poets, must have been influenced by Coleridge, who never concealed his own obligations to Kant, and by the fervour with which Coleridge expounded his doctrine of imagination as opposed to fancy. Fancy associates, imagination integrates; it builds the universe because it is akin to the universe. There is an inherent relationship between nature and the human soul, a relationship apprehended by a vision at once emotional and intellectual. 'Any system built on the passiveness of the mind must be false as a system.'¹⁴ There is thus a common spiritual life in the symbol and in the mind which interprets it. This idea may be seen worked out in the Introduction to the *Biographia Literaria* by J. Shawcross.¹⁵ 'We receive but what we give.' The religion in which Bradley had been trained as a boy never lost its hold on his reverence and affection; but his early acquaintance at Oxford with the Tübingen Hegelians led him to an interpretation of its

¹⁴ Coleridge, *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 153.

¹⁵ 1907 Edition, Vol. I.

truths which Coleridge would not have disdained to own; even though it was not uninfluenced by the 'ineffable charm' of Oxford itself; a charm which, as one of Bradley's older contemporaries felt, could call her children 'to the true goal of all of us, nearer, perhaps, than all the science of Tübingen'.

When we turn to the first of his writings, we can detect the goal which he set before himself, though we can perhaps see it more clearly now than he saw it then. The history of which he writes in 1874 is 'critical' history; that is, history which does not describe events but scrutinizes their reality. Yet it does this, as we shall see in the next chapter, not by weighing the evidence for this or that alleged fact, but by asking how far the fact fits in to our own view of the world and of our experience as a whole. Again, in considering the problem of ethics, conduct is not to be regarded as a series of individual acts or volitions or attempts to win pleasure and avoid pain; it is the experience of a self which can only be understood and judged as a member of a society of selves, a society which in its turn is transcended as the agent finds himself part of a still larger whole of experience, aspiration, and emotion.

The same process of hammering out reality, so to speak, is carried farther when we come to the examination of logic. Logic, originally the formulation of rules for correct reasoning, had become, with the Germans, and especially with Hegel, practically identified with metaphysics, the science of pure being or reality. For it involves the study of propositions and their truth, of inference and its rationality. And this brings in not only psychology, the formation of propositions and judgements, but their connexion with the real world that we wish to deal with in our usage of them. Bradley approaches the matter in his characteristic way. The subject of every judgement, he lays it down at the beginning, is the whole

of reality. The weakness of all logical processes lies ultimately in the fact that we can never do more than feel our way to reality; their strength, in the other fact that we do not simply infer, but that inference, as it were, takes hold of us and draws us on in spite of ourselves; the universe which our thought makes, makes our thought. Finally, in *Appearance and Reality*, he surveys every element in our conscious lives, including the self, truth, morality, God, and shows that they are all, in themselves, imperfect, one-sided, rooted as such in contradiction, and therefore only 'appearances'; while the Absolute, the whole, the real, removed beyond them all, gives them all whatever validity they possess, and leads us, through wider syntheses, toward the only experience which can bring real satisfaction, mental rest in what is completely coherent and comprehensive.

THE LATER YEARS

The remaining seventeen years of his life were spent in the restatement, defence, and elaboration of this thesis. We could wish that there had been less of the abstract psychological and metaphysical treatment, and more recognition of the many-sidedness of this all-embracing reality. But he himself repudiated the idea that reality could be regarded as 'an unearthly ballet of bloodless categories'. He knew that in philosophy we must not seek for an absolute satisfaction, even though a philosophical view of the world gives us the truest satisfaction possible for us. Philosophy is, he said, 'the exercise and enjoyment of but one side of our nature';¹⁶ and he deprecated what Merz has called 'the biased mentality intent on peace and security'. To the general public, metaphysics might be 'the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct'.¹⁷ For others, he said, it is

¹⁶ *E.T.R.*, p. 13.

¹⁷ *A. and R.*, p. xiv.

a means of expressing the divine; the assurance of the presence of the unseen and the eternal. It certainly was so for him. And he pursued the vision of it with something of religious ardour. Not only, as he confessed, did metaphysics afford him a satisfaction not to be found elsewhere; he writes as if he experienced the rapture of devotion to what in religious language might be called its service and its glory. It was indeed to him a religion; and all that was of value in the Christianity in which he had been trained, it is perhaps not too much to say, he found in the thought of a complete and shining experience, raised above time and space alike.

Whether this is indeed religion or its abnegation, whether it is the genuine source or the blank denial of true human satisfaction, we must consider, in justice to Bradley and to ourselves, before this book comes to an end. Meanwhile, we are now in a position to turn to the more detailed examination of the successive stages of his work.

CHAPTER THREE

THE METAPHYSICS OF HISTORY

THE 'WHOLE' AS MANIFESTED IN HISTORY

THE belief that behind the manifold appearances there is the one enduring reality, and that it is the artist's function to discover such a reality—this is a metaphysical conception of painting, but it is a conception which brings the painter's art into a relation with all that is greatest in poetry and philosophy.' These words of Cézanne, quoted by Herbert Read,¹ might fitly be placed beside the quotations from Epstein and Thomas Bodkin given in the last chapter, as an expression, from another art, of Bradley's life-long contention. But those who would admit with Cézanne that the principle applies both to poetry and philosophy as well as to art might hesitate at extending it to history. History, they would argue, is the study of actions or series of actions. History is neither art nor science. The historian has to establish what actually took place. What was in the actors' minds, as distinct from their recorded thoughts about their own or other people's motives and aims, can be but a matter of conjecture. Still less can we lay down laws in a region where any kind of uniformity is undiscoverable.

Bradley, however, at the outset of his career as a philosophical writer, chose to take his stand on what might seem the weakest spot in the territory he was to defend. He entitled his first printed work *The Presuppositions of Critical History*,² a pamphlet of sixty-six pages, long since out of print. J. H. Muirhead has devoted a useful section to it in his *Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy*

¹ *The Meaning of Art* (1935).

² Reprinted in *C.E.*, Vol. I.

(1931), pp. 221-8. To Bradley there could be no sound thinking that was not critical, just as the end of all criticism (a conviction that is clear from every one of his works) is not negative but positive. He knew what he believed, and he was determined to say it. But criticism, a term which is as ambiguous as any philosophical term can be, meant for him, like scepticism (a word which he was content to regard as synonymous), patient and continuous reconsideration of what he thinks he finds himself or others asserting. Any such assertion must be examined, and made to defend itself. It was indeed to be treated with respect, even if felt to be erroneous, until actually convicted of ignorance or insincerity. And when it had emerged from the ordeal, either as a pass or a failure, the ground would be open for something more congruent with the facts as a whole. For only in the whole of knowledge, at least in the field or universe of discourse, could any satisfaction decently or honourably be found. And for such satisfaction, as we have seen, Bradley's intellectual life was one long quest.

CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM AND HISTORY

There is another reason for surprise that Bradley should have started with a discussion of the historical. True, history, at least the history of ancient Greece and Rome, was a recognized part of the philosophical training of the Oxford schools; and Bradley never professed ignorance of history, as he did of mathematics and law. But the brochure before us, while it shows that he could lay history under contribution for any illustration or allusion that he needed, keeps the reader's attention fixed throughout on the philosophical factors which, in the author's mind, make history what it is. There is nothing to suggest that he had fallen under the fascination of the masters of historical writing, of the rise and fall of great nations, or of the spectacular unfolding of dramatic events.

Yet it was not really unnatural that he should have chosen to write a kind of prolegomena to historical studies. The era of Victorian complacency, if it ever existed, had certainly faded away when Bradley migrated to Merton College. Darwinian evolution, however airily it might be dismissed by Disraeli and the Anglican bishops, had shaken the pillars of orthodox confidence, as geology, though less theatrically, had been shaking them for years previously. If the first chapters of Genesis were to be swept into the limbo of unhistorical myth, if the world was not created in six days or even six millennia, and if Adam did not spring up perfect and complete beneath the creating hand of God, what became, it was asked, of the general reliability of scripture? And worse was to come. Strauss had written a life of Jesus from which the miraculous was speciously eliminated; and a more formidable school of German theologians, led by F. C. Baur of Tübingen, had developed a line of attack on the doctrines of the New Testament which pointed to the unreliability both of the accepted history of the first ages of the Christian Church and the cardinal beliefs on which it was founded. Two years after *The Presuppositions of Critical History* appeared, Martineau was lecturing on 'Ideal Substitutes for God'. The way was open for Matthew Arnold's 'something not ourselves that makes for righteousness'. Froude's *Nemesis of Faith* had appeared as early as 1848.

IS HISTORICAL TRUTH POSSIBLE? THE 'FRESCO'

Bradley could not but be moved by these tempestuous currents of thought. He was well aware, to quote his own words, of 'the extent and generally the nature of the influence, which a modification of history must exercise on religious belief'(3).³ It was inevitable in one who felt so deeply, but was generally averse from allowing his deeper

feelings to find expression. He concludes Note A of *The Presuppositions* (58f.), with words which must often have entered the minds of the readers of Strauss's *Leben Jesu*, as of certain more recent New Testament studies, 'after all, alas, the result may be, that of the figures of one whom we most wish to see as he was, we can accept not one as the likeness; and, after removal of vicious mannerisms and distortions, there is left some feeble and colourless outline of him in whose soul the "world's broken heart", it may be, was born again'. He was no apologist for traditional beliefs. Nor had he the patience, even if he had the specialized knowledge or the desire, to meet or support the iconoclastic arguments one by one. What can be taken as true? he asks. What is the criterion of any statement about the past? Surely, one replies, it is a matter of evidence. With this he would agree; but what sort of evidence, and where can it be found?

Of course, all historians worthy of the name rely on testimony of some sort. As soon as history passes out of the dim but entrancing regions of myth or legend or tradition, leaving ballad and folk-song, Homer and even Herodotus, for Thucydides and Tacitus, Gibbon and Macaulay, it must adduce contemporary records, or it is valueless. But contemporary records may be so few that we cannot know whether what we have is really of value; or they may be so numerous that we have to make a selection. In that case, how do we know whether our selection is the right one? Moreover, the gift of impartial transmission, it would appear, is denied to our human frailty. Thucydides himself, with his sense of *Nemesis* and *Aidōs*, has been called a 'mythistoricus' by F. M. Cornford; and both Gibbon and Macaulay have left the judge's bench to plead their own views and brow-beat their adversaries.

All these difficulties, and others, are amusingly summed up in Bradley's 'myth' of the fresco, which he describes

in Appendix, Note A (54-9). A fresco, he imagines, has been preserved from antiquity; the work of many artists and different periods, containing a number of scenes of undoubted historical value, but unfortunately inconsistent with one another, with different backgrounds and costumes, and exhibiting irritating gaps in the sequence they are intended to portray. An artist is sought who shall make out of the whole series one intelligible and satisfying picture. But how is he to proceed? If he is to introduce consistency into the work, there is hardly a detail he will not have to alter. If he fills up the gaps, or if, contrariwise, he is merely to reproduce what his predecessors, reliable or otherwise, have left to him, he will end by increasing the confusion. If he is to integrate his materials into a whole, which is what he is asked to do, he must go beyond the achievement possible to any one of them. And we may add that the artist, in his justifiable desire to give an adequate impression of the whole, as he has been able to gather it, may find it necessary to insert some imaginary incidents to bind the various fragments together, even though he might shrink from going as far as, for example, Lytton Strachey. In much the same way a painter will use a dash of red or a dark shadow to complete the colour scheme, or to preserve the balance of the different parts of his picture.

THE GROUNDS OF HISTORICAL INFERENCE

It is the whole that the historian, like the artist in the myth, must reach. How is it to be done? In answering this question, said Bosanquet, Bradley 'gives the best account known to me of the processes by which all the parts of a whole can be criticized and adjusted on the basis of each other'.⁴ R. G. Collingwood, too, who had given special attention to the philosophic significance of history, believed that none of those who followed Bradley

⁴ *Knowledge and Reality* (1887), p. 322.

had added to him. History Bradley describes as a matter of recollected events. There is no such thing, indeed, as 'subjective' history (8); but a 'simple record of unadulterated facts' is impossible. Instead of such 'facts', all we have are statements by witnesses, which may be reliable or the reverse. We are thus reduced to 'a chaos of disjoined and discrepant narrations' (9), not one of which, however, can be rejected as false. We wish instinctively to see the event as it is in itself; that is, as it is in relation to other events. But this means that we have some prejudication as to the series of events. So indeed has the narrator. 'History without so-called prejudications is a mere delusion' (11). All assertion is a judgement; an intellectual act; a rational pursuit of an object in which, as we would fain discover, the rational is itself embodied.

History rests on inference from the statements which have come down to us, as for example about military or civil events, individual careers and popular movements. When we have judged which of them are the more worthy of attention, we have to infer the general course and character of the events which they constitute, such as the spread of the Roman imperial government in Europe before the beginning of our era, or the armies engaged in the English Civil War in the seventeenth century, or even such minutiae, not wholly unimportant, as whether the youthful Bunyan fought as a Cavalier or a Roundhead in them. Immediately we pass from the mere repetition of statements that have been made to us, we are in the realm of inference. But this inference rests on presuppositions; we judge of the connexion between past events, as we have come to picture or understand them, by our presuppositions as to the laws and uniformities which we believe to exist in our world. Thus, the writing of history offers an entire contrast to the investigations of science. Testimony in the two regions is different. In science, we can be tolerably confident that the facts as described by

competent witnesses, and their connexions, are correct. In history, we can have no such confidence. We do not accept another's testimony because we believe that, like Brutus, he is an honourable man. We can only do so if we can enter into his mind and understand its workings, and if his world corresponds, in his description of it or his allusions to it, to our own.

HISTORY AND ANALOGY—MIRACLES

Thus, '*given* the existence of history, it must be critical; and . . . *if* it is critical, *then* it must rest on present critical experience' (65). History is not a matter of accretions, or of adding one fact to another. Facts indeed do not exist save as accounts and interpretations by the witnesses of what they have observed with more or less accuracy, and which they have subsumed into their world; subsumed, that is to say, into the mass of their ideas about what is actual and possible, and of the connexions between them. These the historian subsumes in turn into his own world; and in the process he will discover that he has two selves, out of which, as it were, a new or a double world is formed. His advance in his work will therefore be by analogy. Criticism 'has to find in the events recorded laws, analogous to those which have been observed in present experience' (48). The critic accepts what is analogous to his own conception of laws in the world as he knows it himself; and it is in the very act of this subsumption that he finds his world enlarged. He is face to face with the dialectic of history. But what he cannot thus subsume, what refuses 'to be fitted into his own world, and finds no analogy in his own experience, he will reject.

One set at least of his readers will be likely to ask at this point: 'Who is sufficient to judge of such an analogy?' And another, 'What then of miracles, and especially of the resurrection of Jesus?' To these questions Bradley gives no answer. Though he clearly has the Christian

faith in mind, he writes neither as a critic (in the popular sense) nor as an apologist. He has his presuppositions which underlie all history, 'sacred' and 'profane' alike. And from the argument just summarized, it might be concluded that history must be reduced to what the historian, from his previous experience, thinks possible or probable. From the world of the probable, indeed, he holds that history, unlike science, can never escape. For he is engaged with the 'imponderables', as we call them—his own world, which cannot be that of anyone else, and human free-will. Bradley might have added, could he have foreseen the future, that science, for all its reliance on trained observation and on mathematical measurements and pointer-readings, as Eddington called them, would grow increasingly modest about any hope of transcending the probable.⁶ But as to the possible, he admits (and here every scientific investigator would now be on his side) that the impossible may become possible, and even, with the widening of the bounds of our knowledge, certain. This is a much more cautious position than that of Bain, for example, who denies the possibility of any 'supernatural' event not governed by 'the general laws of history', or of Zeller, who denies the possibility of all miracles, as contradicting the analogy of all other experience. The three examples which Bradley gives (63-4) are of Herodotus's well-known story, whose accuracy he does not profess to endorse, of the Phoenician sailors' voyage round Africa, when they saw the sun on their other hand; Gibbon's mocking account of the African martyrs who continued to speak after their tongues had been torn out; and the famous phenomenon of Francis of Assisi's *stigmata*. New scientific observations, Bradley points out, may bring all these, even the second, within the realm of the possible; that is, as we may put it, adapting his terminology, our world may be so

⁶ See p. 118, *infra*.

enlarged that without any breach of analogy we may subsume into it material for which previously there would have been no room.

With regard to certain miracles, inside and outside the Bible, the conclusions (if the word is not too strong) of psychologists would appear to be substantiating Bradley's suggestion. But it would be foolish to forget that the term miracle is applied to the subject matter of mere myths and legends as well as to events for which the evidence is impressively strong; and equally foolish to forget that if miracle is understood to mean an infraction of a law of nature, there can be no such thing; laws of nature are simply the summarized statements of what we have observed; they are in no sense commands to be obeyed or disobeyed; and this is really the conclusion to which C. S. Lewis leads us.*

And we can go farther than this. Bradley would have us remember the distinction between our experience and experience in general. This distinction has to wait, for a more careful treatment, till the appearance of the *Principles of Logic*; here it is little more than hinted at. Yet it is vital to Bradley's account of the method of history. The experience from which the historian starts is his own history. He argues by analogy from his own world. But just as nothing in his own experience is isolated from the rest, everything is welded, integrated, into a whole, so that every single event that enters into his experience is judged by the character of the whole. The experience of the individual is a part of the universal experience, much in the same way, we may presume, as the cell is a part of the larger organism. If the cell could be endowed with any experience of its own, that experience would be limited by its immediate environment; it would suspect nothing of the whole organism; yet its own experience would be continually conditioned and enlarged and

moulded by the whole, of which it could never even be aware. The idea of the self contains 'the idea of a potential whole of experience' and this is still 'the supreme category'.⁷

✓ This is Bradley's way of giving Hegel's answer to Fichte. Fichte had developed an unabashed solipsism: I am myself; I can get at nothing outside myself; there is nothing outside myself. My duty is to develop myself to the fullest extent. What seems to me the obstacle, the *Anstoss*, outside me, thwarting my growth, is only the means to the development of me. Thus Fichte. Hegel's reply was to point out that what constitutes what I call my self is my reason, interpreting and making intelligible all my experience; but this reason, like my experience, is not created by me, but discovered. It reveals itself in all that I know of my own self, and until I recognize it as a revelation of what is at work in the universe, of which I know only a small though a growing fragment, I cannot know my self. History thus appears to be, not the account of a part of what is considered, however mistakenly, to be reality; it is the account of what reality reveals, slowly and painfully, to be in thought.

✓ Tried by this standard, a good deal of what has passed and still passes as history, will fail to maintain itself. We have already observed the 'tendentiousness' of Thucydides and Macaulay. Far greater sinners, because far more openly and consciously partisan, are those who have set themselves to write Marxist or Fascist history, who have deliberately isolated one factor in history which they have seen, or imagined they have seen, and have subordinated to it everything else.

✓ But must not the same verdict be passed on writers like Lord Acton and Croce? How is it possible to write a history of human liberty? The only tolerable method is to show how, through all its vicissitudes, liberty has

⁷ J. H. Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy*, p. 228.

seemed to be the sheet anchor of the race. But to do this comes as near to propaganda as if one wrote on the emergence, out of capitalism and the class war, of the classless State. And when an author sets down as his purpose, at the end of his work, 'these things are written that ye might believe . . .', we are tempted not only to doubt his claim to be a historian, but to suspect, if not the accuracy, at least the comprehensiveness, of his account.

HISTORY AND THE UNIVERSE

Yet is anything else either possible or desirable? Even if the writer successfully avoids the danger of what Bradley calls an 'overstrained Pragmatism', using the term 'long before William James and F. C. S. Schiller had made it current coin, 'which fills the past with those fancies and opinions which only belong to the individual consciousness of the writer' (49), another danger has to be faced. If in all historical writing, the facts are subsumed into the writer's self and his world, and if the world as he understands it is dominated, for example, by the thought of the majesty and growth of freedom, the writer would be false to himself if he attempted to conceal this. If the significance and meaning of the writer's world rests on his belief that Jesus is the Son of God, is he not loyal to the canons of historical writing in making it the rule of his selection and arrangement and exposition? On the other hand, other writers, who live in different worlds, will be guided by quite different rules. We shall thus have many histories, but no history. This would be a disconcerting conclusion if we could ever expect to find history in a single writer; and writers and readers must both be continually on the watch against any refusal to listen to the dialectic of history or to enlarge their own world by patiently enduring its clash with another. But, granted

patience, docility, and sincerity, we shall find escape from the dilemma by remembering Bradley's contention that experience means the verification of our statements in the concrete; 'the mind is a principle of unity . . . and from that old self it separates itself more and more, develops and partially solves its contradictions, critically corrects its one-sidednesses, rules out its inconsistencies with unconscious but incessant activity; and all the time is subsuming new matter under this innovating and perpetually growing self' (68-9). The whole universe, as *Appearance and Reality* was to show more fully, is understood when we think the thing as it is in itself. Thus, the spirit of history may be said to use the historian as its means for a more adequate statement of the truth. Hence, the importance of Baur's *Kirchengeschichte*, as Bradley understood it, and his resolve to exclude no historical event from the field of criticism.

THE RESULT FOR THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE THEOLOGIAN

Reference has already been made to R. G. Collingwood, in his *Idea of History* (Ed. T. M. Knox 1946).⁸ Genuine history is an attempt, he says, by means of the study of men and women in the past, to reveal to ourselves what we are, when we share their humanity and can enter into the thoughts by which their actions were brought about. 'There is nothing', Collingwood lays it down, 'that a mind is distinct from, or underlying what it does.' The mind itself is action, as God, to the scholastics, was *actus purus*. Bradley would insist that we can only accept another's testimony if we enter into his mind and, further, that his world must correspond to ours. Our end is not merely the construction of the past, the careful

⁸ See, for a further study of Collingwood, W. H. Walsh, in *Philosophy* (July 1947); a suggestive paper by G. H. Millom, in the *Hibbert Journal* (October 1946), and *infra*, p. 160.

copying of the fresco, as it were, but the systematization of the present. The world the historian lives in is the present, not the past; 'the real means that which criticism has affirmed' (cf. 58).

We have already noticed, and shall notice again, that Bradley is very sparing of illustrations or applications of his views. In the *Presuppositions*, the only concrete allusions he makes are to the *stigmata* and the two allied examples of the apparently impossible. But it is perhaps permissible to inquire how such an application, if he had made it, might have appeared. Suppose we ask how the historian should deal with the French Revolution. Will he come nearer to the method of Carlyle or von Sybel or Hilaire Belloc? We may be in doubt whether the historian has ever felt or wished himself to be 'the ideal witness', the historian who is true to the present. Much of his duty, in so complicated a business as a period of modern history, must be the sifting of evidence; but this sifting will consist of the testing of the strands of evidence by their consistency and coherence with one another and also with the world of his own present. Here indeed he will need caution, a caution to which Bradley perhaps hardly gives sufficient weight. For the ideals and the presuppositions (if we may use Bradley's word for our own purpose) of any one of the past centuries differ from those of our own. The axioms of one age are the exploded fallacies of the next.

But the reconstruction has to be attempted. Bradley even suggests that we may learn something of the right methods from the practice of the police courts. And if the passionate hatreds and unrestrained violence of the *Noyades* seem at first unintelligible to us, like the rage and fury of the Nazis, we shall remember, guided by the analogy of the present, that men are always led by their fears, their hopes, and what they conceive to be their interests, even though these push them to the abominations

of concentration camps and mass murders. Here perhaps we may learn much by seeing the past in the present as well as the present in the past. The one thing which we shall avoid is the attempt to force its ample magnitude into the strait waistcoat of our own private views; to turn its tragic sequences into a sermon on the iniquity of privilege, the futility of *égalité*, the horror of the 'red fool-fury of the Seine' or even the perennial glories of liberty. Our aim will be to show that through those fevered years, as now, 'the world is one, and in that world history exists'.

Does this then rule out the legitimacy of all interpretations of history, as for example, Augustine's conception of the *civitas terrena* as against the *Civitas Dei*, or Dante's view of the divine organization and preservation of the Roman Empire, with its consequences for the Ghibellines and the Guelphs of his own time, or of the apocalyptic outlook, revived from one age to another, of *Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt, vigilemus*? It might be argued that the historian was only doing what Bradley said was his duty, in being guided by the analogy of his own world, and that the diversity of such interpretations proved the imperative need for caution in any attempt 'to see the present in the past'. But it would be safer to reflect that on Bradley's own showing the historian has nothing to do with such interpretations as these. He has to arrive, with what confidence he can, at the facts. To say that such and such a sequence of events came about through the counsel and foreknowledge of God or was intended to impress on the dull minds of men some revelation of his will, is to move in another realm, to build on foundations which, however sure they may look to the eyes of faith, have as little to do with the documents in the hands of the historian as with the spade of the archaeologist.

'THE REAL JULIUS CAESAR'—FINITE CENTRES

Bradley knew quite well that many of his readers would be thinking chiefly of the bearing of his argument on the historicity of Jesus as he is portrayed in the Gospel narratives. Was he another ally of Strauss, or of Renan, whose *Vie de Jésus* had appeared ten years earlier? Such questions Bradley did not answer. What he might have said, had he cared, may be conjectured from a chapter in *Essays on Truth and Reality*: 'What is the Real Julius Caesar?'⁹ The essay is a reply to the statement of Bertrand Russell that a historical character has ceased to exist when he is dead. Bradley writes with the conclusions of *Appearance and Reality* behind him, e.g. that both the self and truth are only appearances, because they are only parts of the whole of reality. Hence, it is true, but in some other universe it may be untrue, that Caesar crossed the Rubicon. With details such as the exact point of the Rubicon where Caesar effected his crossing, history, according to Bradley's contention, can have nothing to do. History might feel impelled to give more attention to the circumstances of the later incident which called forth the famous words, 'you carry Caesar and Caesar's fortune'. It is the essential Caesar, so to speak, which history must reveal. And neither, says Bradley, his own mother nor Caesar himself could have known Caesar as he really was. His life is not limited to his physical existence in the first century B.C. He was and is present wherever anything that the universe contains was present to his mind. This is not to say that he is living in our time as we ourselves are. But he was linked with every part of the universe, spatial and temporal, of which he was in any sense conscious. Yet his universe is ours; we meet one another in it.

Thus, Bradley proceeds, we may go farther and affirm

⁹ Reprinted from the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. XI.

that Caesar, or any other individual, 'is real in so far as anywhere, for any purpose, his being is appreciable';¹⁰ and we may compare this with the negative doctrine of Bosanquet that history has for its ideal 'to disappear into systems of hypothetical judgement, in which the complete ground should do duty for cause and effect, and the relation of time should disappear'. Bradley's more positive conception is based on the elaborate, and, it must be admitted, difficult discussion of what he calls finite centres. These finite centres of experience he had already treated at some length in *Appearance and Reality*, especially in Chapters 23 and 24, and they will demand further attention later on. Here it will be enough to say that it is in finite centres that experience takes place.¹¹ Bradley explains his meaning in sentences like the following: 'everything comes in finite centres of immediate feeling'; but 'these centres with regard to one another are not directly pervious';¹² 'A finite experience already is partially the universe', containing the 'self . . . other selves and the world and God'.¹³ The universe, then, is our experience, which appears in finite centres. These centres are not souls or selves—the soul is a self so far as it contains the opposition of the not self to the self. The centres are centres of our experience which begin in undifferentiated feeling, and pass into relation with other centres, our own or another's, and so into experience as a whole; though 'what the diversity of finite centres means in the end', he admits, 'is beyond our knowledge'.

What is not beyond our knowledge, he would have us reflect, is that as finite centres we are not isolated from one another; when we ask as to the real Julius Caesar, or it would appear, as to the real Jesus of Nazareth, we are asking about what belongs to us as well as what belongs

¹⁰ *E.T.R.*, p. 427.
¹² *ibid.*, p. 469.

¹¹ *A. and R.*, p. 226.
¹³ *ibid.*, p. 525.

to him. No experience can be confined to its centre. Every shore is washed by the sea that washes every other shore.

THE INDIVIDUAL INCONCEIVABLE APART FROM HUMANITY

To follow out the relation of these finite centres (the term does not meet us in the *Presuppositions*) and their relation to the soul and to the universe, would lead us into a discussion which must be reserved for its more appropriate place in the chapters on *Appearance and Reality*; but in the light that it casts on the view of history and reality in the *Presuppositions*, two observations may fittingly be made. First, individuals are no 'hermit-souls', each so enisled in the little ocean of its own experience, that human society would become merely an archipelago or aggregation of units. In *Essays on Truth and Reality*, 'On my Real World', Bradley asserts that 'one main work of philosophy is to show that where there is isolation and abstraction, there is everywhere, so far as the abstraction forgets itself, unreality and error'.¹⁴ These, the last words in his latest volume, written with reference to his considered view of metaphysics, will sum up the contentions he urged in his first. There are no such things as our own experiences, if these experiences are regarded as existing only for themselves. The life of the whole organism throbs in every individual cell. A single glance runs through the world; a sound may disturb the course of the farthest planet. We are a part of all that we have known, of all that has known us. An act of ours affects every member of the race. The children cannot but suffer, and rejoice, because of their fathers. Each is 'all mankind's epitome'. In our hands, as Blake put it, we hold the universe. What this means for the problem of human conduct, Bradley was to work out within the next three years in the *Ethical Studies*.

¹⁴ *E.T.R.*, p. 473.

HUMANITY AND THE INCARNATION

Secondly, we cannot but consider the bearing of this on the central object of the Christian faith. The question whether Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, and suffered under Pontius Pilate, must be investigated as we should investigate Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon. The further question, whether he suffered for us, that he might bring us to God, a question that the professional historian would prefer to leave to the theologian, is certainly germane to our discussion of Bradley. We must not look to him for another theory of the Atonement; but let us suppose that we regard the reality of Jesus as we regard the reality of Julius Caesar, and then go on to think of him in accordance with the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, namely, as in touch with all humanity, whereas Caesar's pervasion of mankind, however wide, was limited. Then the statement of the creed, in language which Bradley himself suggests, will mean that what the universe contains was so present to the mind of Jesus and that his experience was so fully carried on into the experience of the suffering and joy of others, that less than any other could it be bounded by time; and that as it becomes ours, we ourselves reach the whole with its perfect satisfaction and peace. This, however, must be more fully discussed at a later stage, in Chapter 10. No student of Bradley would be bold enough to suggest that he would agree to this exposition. But I am not sure that Bradley would have rebuked one who was bold enough to say, 'you led me on to believe this'.

PENETRATION AND CO-ORDINATION

Unlike his friend Bosanquet, Bradley never appears to have paid special attention to the subject of aesthetics. For all that we can see, Kant's *Critique of Judgement* never penetrated his thought as did the two earlier *Critiques*. But

the achievement of the historian, as Bradley describes it, recalls the thought of the artist. Clio is the sister of Melpomene. We understand and admire each the more when we have learnt something of the other. For however we may define the function of the poet and the artist—to present to us ‘emotion recollected in tranquillity’, to ‘chant to the spirit ditties of no tone’, or to ‘express unblamed the holy light, offspring of heaven’s first-born’—the true artist passes from the impression made on him by those objects and events in the outer world by which we are all surrounded, to an inner world in which these impressions, caught by his own sensibility, are fused or welded into one whole with all else that he has felt and known; they live on, but only as part of himself; we see them as flashing experiences, like snowflakes on a river; he, with the penetrating and co-ordinating powers of the mind’s eye, sees them as an abiding vision. But this penetration and co-ordination is not limited to what is proper and peculiar to himself. His own world is penetrated by a larger world. It is shot through with immortality; with the light of a world, that is to say, which belongs to us all as we have power and will and patience to enter it. And therefore when the artist has painted his picture or completed his symphony, he is not describing something which is alien to our minds, like a traveller’s tale of the tropic jungle or the arctic snows; we recognize it. We share his delight in it. It is his, and he has made it ours.

Similarly, to draw to the conclusion suggested by Bradley’s consideration of history, the historian has for his materials the detached and transitory impressions recorded in the fresco. These by themselves have little or no value. To chronicle the fact that in the past someone noted down something that he saw or thought he saw, however memorable or striking, does not provide material for knowledge. It is the present we live in, not, the past.

The historian must therefore introduce intelligibility and coherence into the various sections of the fresco. This he can only do, as he takes them with the full use of analogy into his personal scheme of the world, his own present, as it were. But if he is to do this effectively, his present world must be illuminated with the light of a larger world; the analogy of his own time and experience must be filled out by analogy with what is observed in every age. Herein lies the true creative activity of art. It is the creative faculty, as Shelley would say, by which we recognize what we know. This history, like tragedy, and indeed like all true art, is of universals. It moves within the sequences of time in order that it may pass outside them. Whether we are or are not at liberty to think of it as thereby interpreting to man the ways of God, we may expect to draw from it something of the satisfaction of reaching that eternal order which Bradley sought through the research into reality. And even if, as Collingwood complains in his *Idea of History*, Bradley had not wholly emerged in the *Presuppositions* from the 'positivistic shadow' of Mill's inductive logic, based on the simple belief that the future will resemble the past,¹⁵ yet Bradley is certainly assured that in that eternal order we must find our resting-place.

¹⁵ See p. 96.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LIMITATIONS OF ETHICS

THE CONSCIOUS AND THE UNCONSCIOUS IN PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY is rooted in the past. Science is not. Science is built on the foundation of exploded theories. It can leave the dead to bury their dead. Philosophy does not seek to answer its own questions nor to get beyond them, but to understand them. That is why philosophy seems to make no progress. Every age asks the same questions. Every serious thinker sets out from the same point. Yet not entirely. He must find his own answers; but the answers that others have found are there, if only to warn him off a *cul de sac*, or else to point to an open gate. Every youthful Elihu may pride himself on seeing farther than his elders; but, without Eliphaz and the rest, he would see nothing. That is why it is always misleading to talk of schools of philosophy, as if the porch or the garden were separated by a stone wall. As the philosopher at least should be aware, *fas est et ab hoste doceri*; we must be ready to learn from our foes. Every enemy may become, even unwittingly, a friend.

None of our outstanding philosophers has illustrated this more clearly than Bradley. He rarely alluded to those who had gone before him, either to praise or to blame. His manner is that of one who, so far as he occupies himself with others, reserves his serious attention for his contemporaries. But nothing could be farther from his thought. Probe beneath the surface, and you will find that he has read everything; that there is not an answer which he has not weighed, or a suggestion from which he has not learnt. And when the reader is inclined to say, 'here

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at all events is something or even someone for whom he has nothing but scorn', he will not seldom come, later on, upon a frank avowal of indebtedness or approval.

Every humble and sincere answer to the questions which life sets before us throws light on all the rest. But every such answer itself finds hints from the answers given in the past. The philosopher is something of an autobiographer. He is not a historian. Still less is he a historian of philosophy. He has his own altar to serve. He cannot be expected to bow down before other gods. He has to discover and as far as he can to describe what is a part of himself. But into the river that waters the garden of his own inner being have flowed more tributaries than probably he or anyone else is aware of. To find our way into the mind of any thinker—and this is pre-eminently true of Bradley—we must not only listen to what he chooses to tell us; we must get at the loyalties and antagonisms which, like all that we take for granted, hardly find their way into words.

GREEKS AND HEBREWS

The first systematic treatise on ethics was written by Aristotle in the second half of the fourth century before Christ, some two generations or more (we cannot give precise dates here) after the Pentateuch and the writings of the main Hebrew prophets had come to be accepted as authoritative religious documents among the Jews. By students of the Old Testament, the Law and the Prophets have often been regarded as opposed to one another; the written code to the living word; ritual and legislation to personal devotion. This, however, neglects two elements common to both. First, their ideal of conduct. Righteousness consists for each, to use our modern phraseology, in the respect for human personality. The interests of our neighbours, physical and spiritual, are to be guarded

with the same care and jealousy as are ours; and this, not because all men are theoretically equal, but because in the eyes of God the welfare of our neighbours is as important as our own. That is, respect for man is rooted in reverence to God. But, secondly, the law of human conduct as laid down by God. If we disobey the Law, we disobey God. The importance of the Decalogue does not lie in its content. At least half its commands, or (to be precise) its prohibitions, are familiar to all society that has emerged or is emerging from barbarism. The uniqueness lies in its prologue: 'God spake these words and said.' Neither prophet nor codifier would ever have dared to lay down any rule on his own authority or even on that of his predecessors. Nor would he have wasted time on speculating as to the basis of law or morals. All came from God; that was enough. And it is hardly necessary to point out that to the writers of the New Testament, to whom everything that God gives to man comes through Christ, their regard for Christ as the absolute authority in faith and morals only gave this principle a clearer expression.

All this was naturally unknown to the Greeks, even after Christianity had spread through the Mediterranean world; and it has been pushed aside in what seems almost studied neglect by writers on ethics throughout the Christian centuries. But for fifteen hundred years at least, these same writers have grown up in a society permeated by Christian ideas; their interests in the grounds of moral obligation are rarely free from more or less conscious loyalty or antagonism to the Hebrew conception of morality, as springing from the commands of God, and their ideal of conduct never quite succeeded in detaching itself from the care and respect, or, as the New Testament puts it, the love that is due to one's fellow men.

PLATO—ARISTOTLE—THE STOICS

But to return to Aristotle. Ethics to him was a part of politics; and politics was the science of the good life in a Greek city or community; the city which was already fading away in the glare of the 'imperialism' of Aristotle's pupil, Alexander the Great. Politics, however, so understood, was impossible apart from a definite notion of man's well-being. To investigate this, and not, as we might say, to construct a theory of right conduct, was the business of ethics. In doing this, Aristotle is as free from the thought of divine commands as were any of the speculators of the Renaissance. Well-being, the aim, conscious or unconscious, of every man, was to him what man was meant to be; it was the activity of a complete or full-grown and mature life. It was built up on education in right habits of choice, avoiding the extremes of both passion and of caution; thus, the habit or settled disposition of bravery is in a 'mean' between foolhardiness and poltroonery; of self-control, between giving way to all our desires and refusing them gratification altogether; and so on. Superficially, Aristotle might be said to be fitting his formula to the accepted ideal of a Greek gentleman. In reality, he was fitting his doctrine of human well-being into the law of human existence, and indeed of all existence, as he conceived it; all things progress from potentiality to actuality; they contain, so to speak, the seeds of the full-orbed activity which is fulfilment of their being at its highest and truest, as pure activity is the fulfilment of what may be called either God or mind, the unhindered sweep of endless and satisfied contemplation.

Some half century before Aristotle's *Ethics*, Plato wrote his *Republic*, or, as it was often entitled, *Justice*. It was the time when the fate of the Greek city ideal was becoming clear to every sagacious politician. The *Republic* was a work on politics rather than ethics. What is that city or

State of which justice can be predicated? But to answer that question, more than politics was needed. The *Republic* might with equal appropriateness be called a treatise on psychology or economics or education. It might be claimed by the metaphysician or even by the theologian, and this, not because these sciences had not had time to be clearly differentiated, but because Plato would have refused to differentiate them; the plain common-sense question with which he started insisted on ranging through the universe for its answer. Every discussion about the nature, the conduct, the interests of men really involves the universe and can only find rest there. Thus, the precepts for a successful or tolerable life in this fluctuating world of sight and sound in which we live must be drawn from the realities of the unchanging world beyond space and time and sense. Life here must be modelled on the pattern of life there, a precept which issues, with Plato, in a certain type of action, due from each citizen, toward the different classes or elements of the society of which he is a member. This life is ruled by the form or essence of goodness, and can perhaps best be expressed by some mathematical formula which, as Plato seemed to believe, contains the very soul of harmony and order.

It is still a question whether Plato identified this regnant idea of the good with what a Greek or a Christian would call God. But in later centuries the Neo-Platonists gave a definitely theological bent to the system. Small wonder that the Christian thinkers who were beginning to ask about the object of their faith the questions which were debated in the schools, were fascinated by the thought of the seen as the reflection of the unseen, and of this life as a passage to the eternal world where beauty and truth and goodness existed as one. Some of them were ready to identify the being Plato frequently spoke of as divine with the God of whom they had learnt in their own Scriptures.

Such an identification seemed to them to illuminate many a tantalizing and obscure passage in those writings. The influence of this Platonic type of thought can be traced right through the Christian centuries. In the middle ages, Aristotle's came to be regarded as the authoritative voice of the past, going far to mould the theology of the Catholic Church. But Plato still maintained an appeal, which regained much of its old strength when the Renaissance came to call men's minds from the letter to the spirit of antiquity.

Side by side with these, other attitudes on conduct were widely taken up; the reverence for duty or what is fitting, for example, which of itself was held capable of producing the highest happiness; the sage, it was said, could be happy on the rack. Others urged the pursuit of a placid satisfaction which often lent itself to be caricatured as sensual pleasure, but which was meant to be lasting, as mere pleasures could not be. Both these views, of the Stoics and the Epicureans, fell beneath the ideal of well-being in a complete life, and the Christian conception of the will of a just and merciful God. But the common-sense simplicity with which both Stoicism and Epicureanism could be preached, neglecting alike the thought of a society which embraced and transcended the individual, and the pattern of the universe in which all life was cast, made the antithesis between virtue and duty on the one side and pleasure and happiness on the other, a permanent element in all subsequent ethical discussion.

THE AGE OF REASON

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when English ethics found its feet, the antithesis was dominant. Hobbes and Butler, Shaftesbury, Locke and Hume had little aptitude or inclination for metaphysical speculations. They were more interested in studying the moral law in the orbit of psychology. They lived in a world where

politics, religion, and, later, economics demanded practical answers to practical questions; and whether they posed as the champions of virtue or of pleasure, they were in search of the kind of conduct which, human nature and inclinations being what they are, would produce the most satisfactory results. The French philosophers caught the inspiration; but they bettered their instruction; and Rousseau proclaimed in stirring tones, as novel as they were enthusiastically welcomed, the empire of the general will, fulfilling itself in every individual. Butler embodied his weighty and more cautious contribution to ethics in his sermons; and one can trace the homiletic element, the desire to commend one's view as the way of right and rational conduct for plain men, who lived in a world which was learning to treat with a new respect both science and economics, not only in the theologian Paley, but in the rationalist Bentham, and the positivist J. S. Mill.

On the Continent, the influence of the pulpit, or the platform, was less marked. Spinoza built his geometrical system of ethics on his highly rarefied conception of substance or being, though he could not shake himself free from the Judaism in which he had been brought up or the Calvinism which surrounded him. Kant, at the end of the eighteenth century, who had thrown over all the dogmas of orthodox religion, fell back, for practical certainty, on the law of duty, the categorical imperative; but this, instead of being a means to any kind of empirical satisfaction, such as might appeal to plain men, was founded on a metaphysical rather than a psychological analysis of the nature of man as a rational being. Fichte developed this austere doctrine into the glorified solipsism of the noble ego, in which, in our own days, the Nazis, misunderstanding it as they misunderstood all else, thought they had found the philosophy they wanted. Hegel, moving into another realm, and, like Spinoza, interpreting ethics by the structure of the universe, where

the real is that which exists for thought, saw in human conduct the gradual and progressive manifestation of the pure spirit or the Absolute. Hegel's views were capable of development to the right or the left. His system has been hailed both as the glorification of the Prussian State and anti-Prussian radicalism. And it was Hegel too who gave to Karl Marx his idea of economic necessity.

Schleiermacher, writing during Hegel's later years, and deeply influenced by the pietistic surroundings of his own youth, imagined himself in more definite opposition to Hegel than a sympathetic student of both would allow. Hegel was not simply anathema to him as he was to the Danish Kierkegaard; but he refused to surrender the primary importance of the idea of individuality; and he sought for the highest good by wedding philosophy to Christian ethics. The individual was to him, as to Leibnitz, the mirror of the universe. In France, later on in the century, Comte, dogmatic rather than critical, and, like Hegel and Schleiermacher, cherishing a deep ethical interest, did not attempt to develop a definite ethical system; but, impressed by the spectacular progress of science, to which Hegel and Schleiermacher had naturally paid little attention, he built up a cult of humanity, which won the allegiance of J. S. Mill and George Eliot.

OXFORD HEGELIANISM

This brings us again to the Oxford in which Bradley lived and worked. For the first half of the nineteenth century, English ethics, in Oxford as elsewhere, was predominantly empirical. Introspection and observation alike revealed the common use of the terms good and bad, right and wrong, for feelings, acts, and characters; and informed us both that we all pursue or are tempted to pursue our own pleasures, and that we are conscious of a certain obligation to avoid what we call wrong and to aim at what we call right. What is the meaning and the origin of these

moral categories, and what is the source of the obligation that is linked to them?

We may be led to the conclusion that we have an innate or intuitive sense of duty, or that pleasure is all that we do or can desire, or, combining the two, that the true satisfaction arises from the pursuit of duty. It may even be that pleasure is itself something that we ought to aim at, whether we believe that such an obligation is some 'stern daughter of the voice of God' from which we cannot escape, or that it is the result of the working of the psychological principle of the association of ideas. In each instance, we are really travelling from the same starting point and through the same terrain. We may be convinced by J. S. Mill, whose *Utilitarianism* was published in 1865, that we cannot be happy unless we aim at 'the happiness of others, or, to quote Wordsworth again, at 'joy in widest commonalty spread'; we shall still be dealing—so the ethical empiricist will assure us—with facts of which everyone is aware, and beyond which we need not trouble to go. The ethical empiricist is not necessarily a devotee either of pleasure or duty. All he asks is to be allowed to build up his ethical system on the springs of action of which he is conscious; and if these differ from what others report of themselves, so much the worse for them.

Two protests had already been made against this empiricism; both inspired by a study—an imperfect study, it must be confessed—of Kant; the first by Coleridge, and the second by Carlyle. But in Oxford the tide did not begin to turn till Hutchison Stirling produced in 1865 his *Secret of Hegel*. Most of his earlier readers thought that, whatever the secret was, it had not been given to Stirling to reveal it. But with Green and Edward and John Caird, William Wallace and Bernard Bosanquet, a movement began which was at once critical of the dominant empiricism, and, to use the German word, transcendental.

BRADLEY'S REPLY—PLEASURE AND DUTY

Bradley, we noticed, attended Green's earlier lectures, but, like the Cairds and Wallace, imbibed more than Green had done of the spirit of Hegel; and in 1876, two years after the appearance of his brochure on history, he published his *Ethical Studies*, anticipating Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics* by seven years. With Bradley, says Rudolph Metz, in *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, 'British Hegelianism became fully fledged, and started on a flight of its own'. And though, later on, Bradley was to write 'I did not and do not know the limits of my indebtedness to Hegel,' he would never call himself a Hegelian. But in the *Ethical Studies* we can watch the starting of that flight. He confesses himself there a follower of Hegel rather than of Kant, though protesting that he alone is responsible for what he says (148).¹ He will allow the tenability neither of the categorical imperative nor of Kant's doctrine that there is nothing good save the Good Will (244n.). He is, as always, striving to overcome the confused and chaotic; to reach a harmonious world view in which the mind can find peace.

Ethics, therefore, as he sees it, cannot begin with the individual, one atom, as it were, clashing with others in an atomic world; but with the self, the personal which becomes one with the universal. The self, moreover, is a system which can only be understood as a part of a larger system, and which insists on enlarging itself. The effect of this fundamental view of the self on the familiar antithesis between duty and pleasure is formidable. Neither the duty nor the pleasure of the individual can be the end of human life; each is indeed self-contradictory and unintelligible; each is fatally enslaved to the atomistic view of life. Suppose pleasure is the end in Mill's sense; then 'all pleasures, because pleasures, are good in

¹ See p. viii, *supra*.

themselves. A pleasure is immoral only when taken where a higher was possible, now or as a consequence. Every pleasure is moral because it has a supposable pleasure below it; every pleasure is immoral, because there is always a supposable pleasure above it. No man is moral, because his knowledge is limited, and he therefore cannot always take the highest conceivable pleasure; but if so, then all men are equally moral, for they all take the highest pleasure they know' (121 n.). This means that moral obligation has nothing 'to which it can attach itself save the likes or dislikes of one or more individuals'; 'in the end it is itself nothing more than a similar feeling' (123). 'Hedonism is bankrupt; . . . in every form it gives an end which is illusory and impalpable. . . . Theoretically considered . . . it is immoral and false' (124).

The rule of duty for duty's sake, Bradley proceeds to argue, is in no better plight. Whatever we take to be its basis, the rule is formal, empty, contradictory, impossible. What we want to know is what our duty is in some particular instance; and of this the rule says nothing. Suppose we say, self-realization is the end. Then 'the self to be realized is the negative of reality; we are to realize, and must produce nothing real' (148). Or if we take 'realize non-contradiction' as the order, "non-contradiction"=bare form; "realize"=give content to; content contradicts form without content, and so "realize non-contradiction" means "realize a contradiction" (151). Every act is a particular, not a universal; and every universal rule of morals is liable to be modified or set on one side. All that is left to us is 'to realize oneself by realizing the will which is above us and higher than ours' (159), which may end in obedience to 'the hypocritical maxim that, before you do what you like, you should call it duty' (156). If self-realization can have any meaning for me, it is when I set myself to fulfil the demands made on me by my station in society, identifying myself

therein with my fellows. The good man 'will find . . . that the greater part of it [his better self] consists in his loyalty, and according to the spirit, performing his duties and filling his place as the member of a family, society, and the state' (220).

We are none of us individuals. We are built up into a community, in which the contrast between real and unreal disappears, and the absolute becomes one with the relative. We must serve our world; but we must beware of wishing to do more. 'This intuition tells you that, if you could be as good as your world, you would be better than most likely you are, and that to wish to be better than the world is to be already on the threshold of immorality' (199). 'We should learn to see the great moral fact in the world, and to reflect on the likelihood of our private "ideal" being anything more than an abstraction' (200). 'There is nothing better than my station and its duties, nor anything higher or more truly beautiful' (201). Yet the community in which a man lives may be 'in a rotten condition' in which right and might are at variance. Bradley quotes Hegel to the effect that 'the wisest men of antiquity have given judgement that wisdom and virtue consist in living agreeably to the Ethos of one's people'² (187), and he adds the lines from *The Phoenix and the Turtle* as the end:

*Two distincts, division none,
Number there in love was slain.*

Yet such identification can never be fully carried out. We must always be realizing the ideal self; but this self passes beyond the society in which we live to a goodness and beauty outside it. 'The content of the ideal self does not fall wholly within any community, is in short *not* merely the ideal of a perfect social being' (205). I must make my will one with the universal, even though this inevitably involves me in a contradiction. I can never

² *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1841), *Werke*, Vol. II, p. 258.

hope to reach entire harmony with my surroundings. Progress if it is real must be in habit and character, not in intensity or quantity of pleasant feeling. But is there such a thing, Bradley asks, as progress or evolution? If there is, can it be anything but a contradiction? Yet 'whatever evolution may be, Ethics is confined within it. To ask what it is, is to rise above it, and to pass beyond the world of mere morality' (250). Morality is an endless process; and therefore a self-contradiction; and being such, it does not remain within its own limits, but feels the impulse to transcend its existing reality. With this vision of ideal morality, the book might have ended. But one question still remains. Since the true end of all our activity, like the essential characteristic of all that is real, is harmony, it follows that self-sacrifice, so often set before us as the very soul of virtue, is itself contradictory and impossible. For how can the self sacrifice itself? It affirms itself in the very act. Self-sacrifice therefore becomes the same thing as self-realization, as it passes from the private and individual existence to that which is higher and indeed the highest conceivable.

THE WILL AND THE SELF

Such are the main contentions of the book. Most readers will be conscious, when they come to the last pages, of a teasing mixture of agreement and repudiation. Bradley's criticisms of the traditional doctrines of morals, vigorous and unexpected as they are, seem both just and conclusive. Yet whither do they conduct us? Have not both leaders and followers been in danger of falling into the ditch? To appreciate Bradley's arguments, however, it will be well to look at some of them in a little more detail. Bradley begins with a discussion of freedom and 'the vulgar notion of responsibility'. What does it mean to be a responsible agent? This is the starting point for any treatment of morality. Of morality itself, indeed, Bradley gives no

considered definition. We might suppose that he, like so many others, had taken its meaning for granted. As a matter of fact, he is defining or rather describing morality on almost every page. It has to do with acts, not feelings. But acts, to be acts at all, are the acts of a self. A man must answer for all his deeds; he must be the same now as he was last year.

Yet he has to oppose himself; the formal self must 'force' the material self. This means 'realize non-contradiction'; pass from the jolts and the shocks of the common life to the continuity of self-consistency, whether to a good end, or a bad. Morality and responsibility imply and explain one another. What then of freedom? Clearly it is impossible, if by freedom I mean that I am to be free at any moment to do or to choose what I like. As Kant pointed out, if I were free in this sense, I should only be the slave of my passions. And what am I to be free from? Everything? That means that I myself have ceased to be. In an article published in *Mind* (1902), Bradley speaks of active attention as the maintenance of an object before the mind; in this the active and passive elements may fluctuate; but in neither can attention be possible apart from will or thought; and he goes on, in a later article of the same year, 'The Definition of Will': 'A volition is the self-realization of an idea with which the self is identified, and in psychology there is no will except in the sense of volition' (*C.E.* 476). Volition, unlike resolve, stands for the 'this'. And Bradley proceeds to ask whether in volition there must also be judgement that the result is possible.

All this may not, at this time of day, appear to carry us much farther. That self-realization is the end might be called a truism. Many writers have left it behind. But Bradley has done two things. First, he has shown that what was till his time the ruling idea of morality, with all the authority of Mill behind it, as being based on either feelings or acts, is an *Unding*, nothing at all; and that

freedom, taken by itself, is in no better case. And second, that if we allow ourselves to take refuge in talking about our self, it is no small task to decide what that self is. To shrink from the task or to fear the metaphysics which it implies, is to fall, as we are constantly falling, into the old absurdities; the moral passes into the immoral; and we are driven to attempt to make real what can never be anything but unreal. In fact, we do not need less of Bradley's guidance today, but more.

What then is the self? We are disconcerted to find that it is impossible to say. We may contrast the higher with the lower, the wider with the narrower. But where is the true self? If a man's self is made up of all that he has been, the self is always that which is to be, which is at present becoming. It is, in fact, infinite; the very fact that it is and thinks itself finite is the proof. For the infinite does not exclude the finite; it is 'the unity of the finite and infinite' (77). Our maxim thus becomes, 'realize yourself as an infinite whole', and the question Why should I be moral? turns into an absurdity.

But who is sufficient for this? Must we not aim at 'the knowledge which can never deceive, the certainty of our own well-being?' (85). Here we face Mill again, and the tissue of confusions which makes up his Utilitarianism. Is happiness the same as pleasure? Whose pleasure? Mine, yours, or everyone's? Are all pleasures equally desirable or desired? Can pleasures, fleeting and subjective as they confessedly are, be considered an end at all? And if I am to aim at the sum of pleasures, what is that sum, and when is it attained? How easy it is, and how perilous, to confuse a pleasant thought and the thought of a pleasure. So the ruling philosophy is pursued ruthlessly, and as the pursuer says, wearily, from point to point. Like another Socrates, Bradley has used all his dialectic, his perpetual questioning (What do you really mean? What does this imply?) to drive his opponent from the field.

THE DIALECTIC OF HEDONISM

Bradley however uses dialectic for another end. If not pleasure, then what of the traditional opposite, duty? Will this lead us to the totality which pleasure cannot even see? We are disconcerted again. The rule, duty for duty's sake, is empty and contradictory. We are back in the world of acts, and we can never escape from their clash. What is the right which we are compelled to will? If we knew it, we still could not succeed in making our will one with the good will.

In all this there is no attempt to take sides with duty against pleasure, with respectability against licence. Bradley does not say, Refuse to make pleasure your aim, but, 'Whether you think of pleasure as an aim or not, do not imagine that you have anything to do with morality. Nor does he affirm that the rule of duty must be obeyed. It is indeed impossible to make a particular act the vehicle of a formal principle. On the other hand, the weakness of hedonist and anti-hedonist alike is that conduct for both is cut up into the small change of a series of attempts to find satisfaction in some detached feelings or acts, none of which, as thus detached, can yield the satisfaction we desire; or, if they did, it would turn out to be no satisfaction at all. We are back at the conception of conduct as atomistic, which is the negation of conduct.

The antithesis between pleasure and duty is so venerable, and the issues it raises are of such immediate and abiding interest, that we are more than apt to overlook the far-reaching modifications in the dispute which have been brought about by psychology, and on which some fuller comment from Bradley would have been welcome. Without committing ourselves to the various definitions of the part played in human life by instinct and habit, we must admit that the occasions in which an individual balances the claims of pleasure and duty on his choice are

comparatively rare. When they occur, they leave on the memory an impression, painful or reassuring, which is out of all proportion to their frequency. Again, anthropology has pointed out how the culture alike of savages and civilized societies imposes a pattern of behaviour on its individual members. The pattern varies indefinitely, as, for example, between Australian aborigines, the Pueblos of Mexico, a Hindu caste, or a Russian kolkhoz; but the individual plays his own part in working out the pattern, asking, generally, no questions about its attractiveness or its virtue. He seldom reflects that if he did anything else, his existence would be insupportable. He is like the bee in the hive, the cell in the organism. But, unlike them, though he does not choose what he has to do, he knows what it is and for the most part he does it without question or hesitation. The same thing might be said of a loyal member of a Trade Union or a religious community.

'MY STATION AND ITS DUTIES'

Anthropology had hardly been heard of by the general public when the *Ethical Studies* appeared. But after dismissing the claims both of pleasure and duty as false to any but an atomistic view of life, Bradley advanced to a position which is implied by psychology and anthropology alike, and, if understood, will do much to preserve both from error. The individual, as such, is and cannot be anything else than a member of a community. It is in the affirmation of a community that I affirm myself. A community is not a herd or crowd; a sort of bag of marbles. It is wholly other than the aggregate of individuals in whose happiness, according to Bentham and the Utilitarians, I am to find my own. It is a 'moral organism'. It is a universal, and as I imbibe its spirit, it lifts my activity into its own universality. In such a community we can neither have rights without duties nor

duties without rights. Here we pass beyond the region of what Bosanquet speaks of as 'claim and counter-claim'. As Bradley himself expressed it, claiming regard and standing on one's own right is a pre-Christian attitude. Thus the self is reached; the contradiction between the 'false private' and the true public self will remain; but to know that it is there is to be on the way to overcome it. Fichte had asked, though he gave the words a somewhat different meaning, how we can understand the interchange of subject and object if not on the ground of their absolute identity. Ideal and social run together. The moral man identifies his will with the universal.

Bradley considers the various difficulties that will occur, one by one. To treat of them in detail is impossible here. As to the most serious, that a clash of duties is inevitable, as with the father and the politician, the Christian and the trade unionist, Bradley answers that this is a matter of practice rather than theory. Undoubtedly, Bradley regards the principle of 'My Station and its Duties' as his main contribution to morals. It brings Plato, so to speak, up to date. Rising out of the ruins of the individualistic attempts to urge men to perform certain actions, or to enjoy or fear certain feelings, it recognizes the unity of the self and society, as something that is felt, though often overlooked, rather than proved; but whose denial lands us in unescapable difficulties and contradictions. It is the disproof alike of Mill and of Herbert Spencer.

Bradley's position recalls T. H. Green's insistence on the common good and Bosanquet's on the general will. If Rousseau could survey the philosophic systems that have followed him, we might see a smile on his placid countenance. But Bradley builds up his argument with a stress on both the ideal and the concrete which is all his own. The argument is psychological rather than metaphysical. He does not begin, like Green, with a metaphysical

deduction of the universal consciousness from the consciousness of the individual. But he moves in a realm where the metaphysical and the psychological are both at home. The self is finite; therefore it is infinite. This is at bottom scarcely distinguishable from Green's contention. But it is Bradley's firm grasp of the concrete which gives him his strength.

There is however one limitation which should be noticed. What Bradley appears seldom to have noted is that the individual's community is not homogeneous (see 225). It is made up of many groups, and the attempt to enter into a harmony in each of these may involve a collision not to be escaped from by Bradley's distinction between practice and theory. A man must fill his place, as Bradley says, as a member of his family, of society, and of the State. But can he fill his place in one of these by neglecting it in another? How if the family demands this and the State demands that? Who is to decide between Antigone and Creon? It is curious, indeed, that the existence of a hierarchy of groups, social, industrial, and political, to each of which the individual is forced to give some allegiance, is almost universally overlooked in current discussions of the relation of the individual to the community or the nation. Group selfishness is capable of being a much uglier thing than individual selfishness. I may find myself by passing from the lower group to the higher. But what criterion have I, other than a purely quantitative one, to enable me to decide between lower and higher? When the claims of one group must go under, which is that group to be? To most men, community means family; neighbourhood, or a selected and ideal section of it; commercial, religious, or political associates; and on occasion, as we have known in these war years, the nation, with its glories of birth and State, or, for a few exalted moments, perhaps, humanity, present and to come. Where, among all these, do we find

the ideal self? And what is to prevent us from giving up to party, or even to the tiny circle around the parish pump, what was meant for mankind? The group in which we find or lose ourselves is often what his caste is to a Hindu. It erects a barrier over which no sympathy can climb, and beyond which no good-will can emerge. It might then conceivably, as Bradley urges in another connexion, be a moral duty not to be moral.

This is a condition which is not contemplated here. Nor did Bosanquet do more justice to it. 'A careful analysis', he said, 'of a simple day's life of any fairly typical human being would establish triumphantly all that is needed in principle for the affirmation of the absolute.'³ But to Bosanquet the individual is permeated by the general will, and the State is his truer and better self. Bradley prefers, as we noticed, to speak of the intuition that tells you that if you could be as good as you would, you would be better than most likely you are.⁴ But how can we forget that, as Bradley has already reminded us, the social group, larger or smaller, in which we have our own station, may itself be bad? 'Social enterprises', says Laird, 'need to be justified as much as individual enterprises.'⁵ Unless we are again to fall back on the convenient distinction between theory and practice, we have another example of the dialectic principle that every assertion turns into its contrary until some higher synthesis can be discovered. Be that as it may, this neglect of the *morcellement* of the moral community, common to most schools of moralists, to Butler and Kant, to Comte and Mill, as to modern writers like Prichard and Broad, has been disastrous. Plato and Aristotle might have given us warning; but the universality of the evangelical command of love to all men has led

³ *Principle of Individuality and Value* (1912), p. 377.

⁴ See J. Laird, *The Idea of Value* (1929), p. 249.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 252.

those who would not dream of disputing its divine authority into forgetting that love to a husband or son must take a different course from love to a business rival, an enemy of the State, or a habitual criminal; and that the practical difficulty of finding or realizing oneself in a society that abounds in opposing elements may shake the foundation of the noblest theory. It certainly is not met by Bradley's remarks, valuable as they are, on the true nature of self-sacrifice. Probably, however, Bradley would admit all this. His surrenders are as unexpected as his attacks. They are constantly to be found in the annotations which he added to the *Studies*. He himself will tell us that we cannot rest content with morality; we must go on to religion; a step to which we are forced by the tension between the 'is' and the 'ought to be'.

BRADLEY AND SIDGWICK

Before turning to this important matter, we must notice a kind of supplement to Bradley's central chapter in the *Ethical Studies*. Before the book was published, Henry Sidgwick, in 1874, produced his *Methods of Ethics*. Sidgwick spent all his life at Trinity, Cambridge, as Bradley spent his at Merton, Oxford. Unlike Bradley, he was a teacher as well as a writer, and he had won his place as a recognized authority on political philosophy and economics. He was even interested, as was Bradley, and rather more seriously, in the new and puzzling phenomena of spiritualism. He was by nature a sceptic, as his friend James Bryce said;⁶ but his scepticism, unlike Bradley's, was the result of an inability to make up his mind, rather than the impulse to question all presuppositions. It was indeed jocularly remarked that the reason for the wide influence of his *Methods* was that no one could understand where he stood. In morals, he was a successor to J. S. Mill; an avowed utilitarian, he founded his system

⁶ *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1903-4).

on intuitionism; and the elaborate and subtle argument of his book goes beyond anything that Mill had produced. Bradley therefore felt that it needed more than a note added to *Ethical Studies*, and accordingly published, in 1877, *Mr. Sidgwick's Hedonism: an Examination of the Main Argument of 'The Methods of Ethics'* (C.E., Vol. I, 71-128).

Perhaps he was moved by Sidgwick's criticisms of the *Studies*. 'Uncritical dogmatism', Sidgwick had said, 'is the largest and most interesting element in the work.' He complained of the absence of intellectual sympathy and tranquillity of temper; was the conclusion, he asked, a paradox or a vague ethical commonplace? But Bradley saw quite rightly, in the *Methods*, not the direct negative of his own position, for the adjective direct could hardly be applied to it at all, but a subtle and specious attempt to support a belief which could in effect lead nowhere. The old fallacies gathered under the mantle of the familiar utilitarianism were there; but nothing had been done to make them respectable or trustworthy. Hedonism and individualism on the one side and abstract rationalism on the other had met, but had not come together, and the result was a mechanical mixture of both, as little satisfying as it was deserving of the title of philosophical. The code laid down the pursuit of the good of all, but the passage from my good to the general good was still undiscovered. If the code was not comprehensive, if, that is, it did not include everything that might conceivably be held to be a good, it ceased to be a code; if it was, it could give no guidance. To interpret the good which we 'must' pursue as the sense of pleasure made the good unattainable, whether we regard this sense as finite or infinite. We can never say I have attained it. And would you, Bradley asks his opponent, be willing to administer the world on such a principle as this of rewards and punishments? Jesuitism is for you; Christianity is against you. The attempt to pass from common sense to a general rule by

means of 'reason' is a cheat. We look for a *deus ex machina* to solve our perplexities; but, Bradley complains, 'it will not come to the front; the stage is in confusion; and the curtain falls hurriedly in the middle of the fifth act'.

The pamphlet soon dropped out of print. Sidgwick's *Methods* went on from one edition to another. But Bradley was none the less clear-sighted. There could be no reconciliation between Sidgwick's position and his own. If Sidgwick was right, Bradley himself was beating the air. But again, if Sidgwick was right, there could be no morals; nothing but a frustrated calculus which could never work out. Nor could there be any place for religion. Sidgwick would probably have agreed. The cousin and brother-in-law of the Archbishop of Canterbury, E. W. Benson, he professed himself a theist some eight years before the appearance of the *Methods*, and he afterwards worked with Leslie Stephen, Stanton Coit, and others to establish the Ethical Society in 1874.

FROM MORALITY TO RELIGION

The last pages of *Ethical Studies*, the 'Concluding Remarks', show a profound interest, and something more than interest, in religion. Few writers on morals have allowed themselves to say as much as Bradley has said here. In placing religion as high as he does he is only following Hegel. Religion, Hegel once said, is the attempt to express the complete realization of goodness through every aspect of our being. And as far as this goes, it is something more, and therefore something higher, than philosophy. A philosophy without heart and a faith without intellect are abstractions from the true life of knowledge and faith. Professor W. G. De Burgh,⁷ indeed, in emphasizing the increasing effort of morality to transcend itself, a process which is only accomplished by religion, finds that Bradley tends to lay a growing stress on religious truth,

⁷ *From Morality to Religion* (1938), pp. 220 f.; cf. pp. 325 f.

and, on the strength of Bradley's own assertions (205, 231), reminds us that humanity can only be considered as a community if Christianity be accepted as its redeemer. Bradley never actually says this; 'against this ideal self the particular person remains and must remain imperfect' (205). 'The moral consciousness does not say that it [the universal] is realized anywhere at all. . . . [But] if religion, and more particularly if Christianity be brought in, the answer must be different. The ideal here is a universal, because it is God's will, and because it therefore is the will of an organic unity . . . in which . . . for God . . . the bad self is unreal (231). But he lays it down that morality is an endless process. As such, it contradicts itself. It stretches out to something that it can never reach; to a 'not-myself'. Yet for religion, this not-myself is real, while it is also ideal. It is other, higher, than we are; yet we have already reached it. 'In the moral consciousness, we found two poles, myself and the ideal self' (322). We are also aware of the 'intolerable discord between the self which I feel to be real and yet which knows itself as unreal'. Religion holds up before us the ideal of the reconciliation of the divine and human as real; the principle is there already; and 'you must believe that you too really are one with the divine, and must act as if you believed it' (325). This, says Bradley, is the faith which justifies (328). Finally, morality and religion coincide (336).

It is interesting to compare this treatment of faith with a much more biblical treatment by T. H. Green of the same subject, in 'Justification by Faith in Romans'.⁸ Green's lecture is mainly an exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, with references to Galatians and 1 and 2 Corinthians. He deals, as Bradley had no idea of dealing, with the question how Christ was 'made sin', how he dies to sin, and what is the connexion between the law and

the 'new walk', between faith and works. Bradley returned to the subject in his paper on 'Faith'.⁹ The faith which Bradley emphasizes is the faith by which I identify myself with my object, and thus become what I truly am. I pass beyond my isolated existence to the identity of the divine and the human. We shall find a more cautious statement of this view in *Appearance and Reality*.¹⁰ In saying so much, however, Bradley takes us far beyond Matthew Arnold, who was near enough to Bradley's time to be the unfortunate target of his ridicule, with his 'something not ourselves that makes for righteousness' (316-18). For such a faith and its results in conduct, the rites and ministrations of the Church are no substitute, however useful. Faith is consummated in 'oneness with God, and everywhere we find that "Immortal Love", which builds itself for ever on contradiction, but in which the contradiction is eternally resolved' (342). Here Bradley finds the heart of the Christian doctrine of Atonement or Reconciliation (324); foreshadowed, though with a difference, in art and science. We may perhaps say of Bradley what C. C. J. Webb said of Bosanquet,¹¹ that his evangelical training led him to attach more recognition to the Atonement than the Incarnation, and to rest more on the reconciliation of the two selves by the synthesis of faith than on the actual life or words of Jesus.

Is this the answer of Christianity to theistic or humanistic morality? Bradley appears to hold that it is. He claims the authority of Christianity for his interpretation of the self appropriated by faith (330). But there is no word in these pages of Christ; hardly of God. Such a description of the ideal, the all, which is felt to be real, is a pale substitute for the evangelical preaching of God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. But, as

⁹ *Philosophical Review*, Vol. XV.

¹⁰ See Chapter 8, pp. 190 ff., *infra*.

¹¹ 'Bosanquet's Philosophy of Religion' (printed in *Philosophy* in the year of Bosanquet's death, 1923).

Bradley says, he is 'insisting on certain elements of the religious consciousness' (322n.). If, as Athanasius put it, Christ became human that we might be made divine, if the doctrine of the Incarnation means that through Christ's assuming our humanity into his divinity, believers are made one with God, we may be grateful that Bradley has pressed the identification on our attention, and urged that whether we start from freedom or necessity, duty or pleasure, we must end at that point. He says nothing of the stages in the work of Christ, and still less of any 'scheme of salvation'. But the theologian who desires to do justice to the idea of incorporation into Christ is apt to leave us in the mists of vague assertions; we need the discipline of philosophy as well as the data of experience to see the road along which it may be vouchsafed to us

*While on earth in heaven to be,
God, by sense unseen, to see,*

and to find the God who is all things, in all things.

THE GOOD SELF AND THE BAD

Bradley treats of religion again at the close of *Appearance and Reality*.¹² There, he is dealing with God in relation to the Absolute, a subject that we shall consider in Chapter 6. In these pages of *Ethical Studies*, he is rather concerned with the impersonal divine. In the later work, as we shall see, he is far from suggesting that metaphysics, like morality in *Ethical Studies*, leads on to religion. Metaphysics has and must have the last word. Yet, even in dealing with his metaphysics, we shall find grounds for believing that his view of the world prepares the way for the Christian faith. Meanwhile, we can most fittingly close this discussion of the *Ethical Studies* by referring to the distinction between the bad and the good self which precedes the final reference to the consummation of

¹² See *A. and R.*, pp. 438-54.

morality in religion. The distinction rests on the fundamental claim that goodness, in morality, is harmony, coherence. The good self is the self which, in the main, is integrated and harmonious. I am willing, in it, what I feel to be my self. '“I” in the highest sense am present in it, . . . and see it, however partially, yet truly realized in a positive objectification' (304). It is self-sacrifice, because we give up our existence to what is higher. It is also self-realization, because in giving up ourselves 'as this or that', we identify our will with the ideal. The bad self has no such unity. Its ends are not a harmony but a collection. They are 'perpetually in the way of one another'. The only sense in which the bad self can be said to exist at all is that its desires are not for the bad as such but for something which is envisaged as good (306n.). The good is the harmonious, the consistent; unity in a multiplicity; according to a pattern to which, if we would be ourselves, we must conform; which, here and now, is not; and yet which for ever is.

Like the brochure on Sidgwick, the *Ethical Studies* soon became hard to procure. The author refused to reprint the book, and his interest, as is suggested not only by his subsequent books but by the generous succession of contributions to philosophical periodicals, passed into other regions. When a second edition was at last issued after his death, in 1927, a series of additional notes by the author which was included in it showed how he had been quietly re-thinking and modifying its contents. 'This is very doubtful', he comments on one page; on another: 'It won't do and was wrong and due to ignorance.' Not that there are any serious alterations. What the notes reveal is the conscientiousness which insisted on weighing the values of parentheses or *obiter dicta*. On the other hand, he was content to leave the discussions on ethics which came to the front in later years almost unnoticed. There is little in the additional notes, for instance, on the Values.

The reason perhaps can be gathered from the first paper in the *Essays on Truth and Reality*, originally written as the preface for an unpublished book, in 1906. Goodness, worth, value, are one thing. The test is the satisfaction that they bring. No complete satisfaction is to be gained from following beauty, truth, or goodness. Each is good in its own sphere; but they must not overlap. Philosophy itself starts with an assumption; and it must deny that truth has so far and actually been reached—the true scepticism which, rightly understood and practised, dispels doubt.

This denial, however, will call for more notice later on.¹³ The reference to the Values will suggest that while, as we know, Bradley was constantly revising or modifying what he had written, he was also throwing off ideas in magazine articles which were not fully co-ordinated or consistent with his more formal work. Two other examples may be given. As early as 1878 or 1879, he wrote a paper on self-sacrifice, which was not published till 1894, in the *International Journal of Ethics*.¹⁴ Here he contrasts self-sacrifice with self-assertion, maintaining that for the Christian point of view there can be no limits to self-sacrifice; but that the question becomes very difficult when we deal with the two principles in international or even intra-national affairs. Can Free Trade and Competition be Christian? And if international law is to be effective, it must have an executive, which will make the pursuit of peace at any price impossible.

In the same journal and in the same year he published 'Some remarks on Punishment',¹⁵ in which he points out the effect of Darwinism in calling society from punishment, as the reaction of the community to the guilt of the criminal, to surgery. We can never be sure of the amount

¹³ See Chapter 9, pp. 214 ff., *infra*.

¹⁴ See also a paper, 'Is Self-sacrifice an Enigma?' published in *Mind* (1883); *C.E.*, Vol. I, 129–32.

¹⁵ *C.E.*, Vol. I, 149–64.

of the guilt of the wrong-doer; but the community (here we might almost be listening to Bentham) has a right to secure its own welfare; and this can only be accomplished by selection.

In 1912 Bradley wrote a Paper, 'On the Treatment of Sexual Detail in Literature',¹⁶ in which he admits that there may be a real danger from the appeal in literature, as in art, to the lower desires and passions; it should not however be serious, since in all true art and literature, attention is called away from the sensual to the contemplation of beauty and reality; Plato had said the same thing, in more elaborate language, in the *Symposium*. This, however, Bradley allowed, is not true for all readers and writers; and a note added later on shows that he grew more conscious of the peril. Though entirely Bradleian, this is less than might have been expected from the author of the *Studies*. It comes nearer to the respect which is shown for the small change of ethical discussion in more recent work, where we are bidden to discover the basis of the right and the good in what the ordinary man thinks of when he is debating whether to keep a promise or to return a book. Writers who are content to do this, like G. E. Moore, in *Principia Ethica* (1903), and the latest of Moore's critics, A. C. Ewing, in *The Definition of Good* (1947), are surely forgetful of Bradley's reiterated reminder that the moral life is a unity. 'It does not fulfil duties any more than it pursues pleasures.' It is not a series of actions, however conscientiously founded on some conception of what constitutes the good or the obligatory. Such an interpretation inevitably leads to doubtful disputations which no ingenuity of the casuist can remove. The good life is the coherent life; not in the sense that its maxims do not clash with one another, or that its desires do not pull in opposite directions; but that it is the harmonious expression and embodiment of the

¹⁶ *C.E.*, Vol. II, 618-27.

will to fill its place in a community of more or less like-minded persons.

We are limited in our knowledge of the present, and still more by our incapacity to forecast the future. Such a wish can never reach its fulfilment; but the imperfection to which it is thus chained becomes itself the assurance of a perfection which is at once ideal and in the true philosophic sense of the word real. And when, in this way, we no longer forget the agent in the action, we are led on, as Sir David Ross was, when he followed up his book on *The Right and the Good* by his *Foundations of Ethics*, to a position which seems constantly on the verge of returning to Bradley, and of recognizing that the moral life is one and indivisible—the activity of the whole man in the whole universe, in which potentiality is always reaching out to actuality, and is passing out of the world of becoming into that of being, or from appearance (to anticipate Bradley's later antithesis) to reality.

CHAPTER FIVE

LOGIC AND TRUTH

A FRESH DIALECTIC—REALITY

WE now pass to the second of Bradley's three main subjects. They were by no means distinct. The *Principles of Logic*, indeed, reads like a preliminary study for *Appearance and Reality*; the one is as much a work on metaphysics as the other. And if, after reading the *Principles of Logic*, we cast a glance back to the *Ethical Studies*, we can see how in that work he was preparing for what was to come in the succeeding book. We have already compared the *Studies* with what Green was concerned with at the same time. Bradley sat less close to Kant than did Green; and, more clearly than Green, Bradley presents us with a *Weltanschauung*, a conception of the moral universe. Kant had done the same thing. His view of duty, proclaiming its nature in the categorical imperative, links together the individual, society and God, in the present and the future. But Bradley's moral universe is not Kant's. Kant saw as the business of religion the confirmation and justification of the moral law. Bradley saw religion as the higher level to which morality has to find its way, or else, losing its life by refusing to find it, to founder.

But that universe can hardly be said, as yet, to hang together; and Sidgwick, if he had cared to turn Bradley's shrewd metaphor against its author, might have retorted that Bradley's God, the all-embracing self, was no better than a *deus ex machina*, descending to relieve disconcerted mankind by telling them that though they could not be moral, since morality itself was evanescent, they might yet find a harbour when the bark of morality was no

longer seaworthy. What, Sidgwick might have asked, was this all-embracing self? Was it simply a transformation of the supreme being in whose belief Bradley himself had been brought up, or was it what A. E. Taylor speaks of as the central point of his developed position, 'the thorough-going super-relational unity of all reality'?¹

It is clear that Bradley, in what we may call the inner and unsleeping dialectic of his intellectual life, felt the insistence of some such question; to answer it, or to approach an answer, he published, in 1883, seven years after the appearance of *Ethical Studies*, the *Principles of Logic*. This work is really a discussion of the three factors in the universe of mind—action, thought, and reality. The categories of morality cannot be understood apart from those of metaphysics. 'I must' implies 'I act, I think, I am.' And what I am demands not only a consideration of my station in society but of my relation to the universe, to being in its real nature; that is, to reality. This is the real subject of the *Principles*. In fact, 'Appearance and Reality' would have served almost equally as well as a title for the *Principles* as for the later and more comprehensive work. Bradley was always conscious that philosophy 'is confronted with a mass of prejudices'. 'The ground must be cleared of these, and this demands a critical or if you will a sceptical study of first principles.' 'First Principles' was the title which Herbert Spencer chose for the exposition of his cosmic system (1862).

WHY THEN 'LOGIC'?

Why then did Bradley call his work the *Principles of Logic*, and why did he spend so much time in discussing problems of logic raised in the more familiar and restricted sphere of reasoning, correct or incorrect, if what he was really interested in was the reality to which all reasoning is ultimately directed? The truth is that the two subjects

¹ *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1924-5).

cannot be kept apart. It is impossible to judge whether the path which our reasoning pursues is the right one unless we have some notion as to the goal to which it is to lead. Nor can we place any reliance on the methods of our reasoning, nor on the terms which they employ, unless we can be sure that they correspond somehow to the world of reality. Otherwise, reasoning would be no better than a game in which the mallets might turn into flamingoes and the balls into hedgehogs. Hegel had already chosen to give the name of Logic to his most elaborate metaphysical work; and what pass for works on logic today are often barely intelligible apart from their authors' views on metaphysics. Even if the authors in question deny or ridicule the possibility of metaphysics, we must not forget that the very denial of metaphysics is either bad metaphysics or a metaphysics which, denying itself, does so on metaphysical grounds. This is not to assert that reason and reality, or thought and things, are identical. As little does it mean, in the Kantian phrase, that 'the understanding makes nature', or, contrariwise, that nature makes the understanding. Reasoning, indeed, may lead into sheer error; though this we could never know unless we had some criterion of error and truth to apply. But if our purpose is serious, that is, if it has anything to do with action and our dealing with the world which appears so uncomfortably independent of us, we must somehow correlate our reasoning with it.

GREEK AND MEDIEVAL LOGIC

It must not be assumed that Bradley, after completing the *Ethical Studies*, set himself to write a book on metaphysics, and to approach the subject by way of logic. He was probably thinking as much of the philosophy that was current in his own Oxford. In the *Ethical Studies* he had attacked the prevailing individualistic utilitarianism. He now armed himself against the conceptualism, and the

associationalism which had been driving the old scholastic logic, derived in its turn from Aristotle, off the field.

The issues involved will be plainer if we cast a glance at the earlier history of the study of logic. Nearly all the philosophical possibilities already alluded to were considered in the various dialogues of Plato. Plato indeed is still found to be capable of replying to his critics, as may be seen for example in the study of the *Parmenides* by F. M. Cornford.² In Plato, logic and metaphysics are still undifferentiated. It was Aristotle who first isolated logic as the science of correct reasoning; and it is remarkable that practically the whole study of logic in Europe until the beginning of the nineteenth century, and a great deal of it since then, has been content to move within the territory which Aristotle marked out, and to examine and re-examine the structure which he raised thereon. Logic had been carried to daring lengths in India; but the results of Indian thought were not known in the West before the labours of English Orientalists in the early years of the nineteenth century. Following the Greek Sophists, who professed to give instructions that would enable their pupils to gain the victory in disputes in the law courts or debates in the assembly, Aristotle reduced these instructions to rules and methods. He asked what kind of arguments will yield irrefragable conclusions, and what those conclusions are. The type of all sound argument is—all human beings are subject to death; I am a human being; therefore I am doomed to perish. Every valid argument must be capable of being reduced, sooner or later, to this syllogistic form.

Such a statement led naturally to the consideration of other types of propositions, as, for example, no human being is immortal; some men are long-lived; some men are not long-lived; every object is either lifeless or living; if iron is hot, it burns the hand. What inferences can be

² *Plato's Parmenides* (1939)

drawn from these? And what results will follow from propositions such as—this statement is necessarily, or probably, or possibly, true? Further, we cannot affirm the 'is' (as in 'man is mortal') without being faced by the question whether 'is mortal' means is the cause of, or is caused by, mortality. Is mortality a property of man, or an accident, like longevity? Moreover, a great deal of our reasoning is or appears to be of a quite different type. We do not draw conclusions from general statements; we start from particular observations and, by a process of induction bringing in more and more of these observations, reach further conclusions, either particular or general. This process, however, may be regarded as ancillary to deduction, the attempt to provide the general statement with which deduction starts; and it labours under the serious disadvantage that we can never know when the particulars which we have collected will justify a general statement, and when we may not have to witness the tragedy, as Huxley called it, of a theory killed by a new and unsuspected fact. But deduction is equally vulnerable. This can be seen at once if, in the conclusion of our typical syllogism, we insert the word 'too'; I too am mortal. If I had not known beforehand that I was mortal, what right had I to make the general assertion about mankind? If I did know it, what becomes of my deduction?

There is also a third kind of reasoning; Singapore is East of Calcutta; Calcutta is East of Baghdad; therefore Singapore is East of Baghdad; or, I am taller than John; John is taller than you; therefore I am taller than you. This has not always received the attention it could claim; but the call for the defence of the two former types has been responsible for all the main subsequent developments of logic. Until the spectacular advance of our knowledge at the close of the middle ages, when observation of the physical world sent men from the lecture room

and the debating hall to the laboratory and the open field, the insistent problem was that of deduction, the more so as deduction was inseparable from the study of theology. The defence was made by claiming that mankind (to revert to our previous example) is a class; a unity which is more than the sum of the individuals to which the term is applied. But this only led to the acute controversies of the schoolmen, based avowedly on their Greek models, as to whether these classes are as real as the individuals. They are even perhaps more real, existing, as they must be supposed to exist, independently of us who argue about them. Or they may be taken as thoughts, concepts, in our minds; or, again, as only names serving as convenient labels for individuals who are seen or felt to be alike in certain respects, however different in others. The far-reaching issues of these debates are well brought out by M. H. Carré, in his *Realists and Nominalists* (1946), a study of Augustine, Abelard, Aquinas, and Ockham, the last three being the leaders of the main contending parties among the schoolmen. To ask what it is that really exists, and how we can know it, is to link logic at once with both metaphysics and epistemology.

Similarly, induction could be defended on the principle of causation. If a certain medicine, such as M. and B., cures sufferers who are known to have taken it of certain diseases—such was the argument—it must be the cause of the cure; nature is uniform, and this uniformity is based on causality. Causes have the same effects; and the advance of our knowledge of the universe we inhabit will depend on our discovery of these causes. Inductive logic thus becomes the establishment of the method for making such discoveries. Once more, we are in the region of metaphysics; for if we could make no assertion about the reality of causes and effects, and if we had not decided to believe that nature was uniform, discovery would be beyond our hopes.

BRADLEY'S ATTITUDE TO LOGIC

Logic has thus no clearly defined boundaries, unless, with a more modern school, to which reference must be made later, it is regarded merely as an attempt to secure verbal consistency; to draw out, in a series of propositions, all that is or may be implied in any one sentence; and to reduce all propositions to symbolical forms, which can be treated like algebraical formulæ, quite apart from any correspondence with the world outside the mind which constructs them. But even those who, like the majority of logicians, hold that reasoning is only valuable as a way to truth, will regard judgement and inference as not only derived from our modes of thought, but as dependent in some way or other on the conditions of existence. 'I entertain no doubt', asserted Bosanquet, 'that, in content, logic is one with metaphysics, and different from it, if at all, simply in mode of treatment and in tracing the evolution of knowledge, in the light of its value and import, instead of attempting to summarize its value and import apart from the details of its evolution'.³ 'For logic it is a postulate that the truth is in the whole. The forms of thought have the relation which is their truth in their power to constitute a totality. . . . The truth, the fact, the reality, may be considered in relation to the human intelligence as the conduct of a single persistent and all-embracing judgement.'⁴ This view is cardinal also with Bradley. It is the doctrine of a reality whose organic unity is all-inclusive; reality is the one subject of all judgement.

But this was by no means generally acknowledged in the Oxford to which Bradley went up in 1865; and Bradley, less interested than T. H. Green in the refutation of opponents on the ground of Neo-Kantianism, and than

³ *Logic* (2nd Edition, 1911), Vol. I, 232.

⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 2 ff.

the Cairds and Wallace in the exposition of Neo-Hegelianism, followed his own line. 'I confess', he says, (ix),⁵ 'I am not sure where Logic begins or ends.' He acknowledges his debt to Lotze, as to Sigwart and to Jevons; and in the preface to the second edition he writes: 'If I had succeeded in owing more, I might then perhaps have gained more of a claim to be original' (viii). He was conscious of the tentative character of much of his own thought. To quote again from the preface to the first edition: 'On all questions, if you push me far enough, at present I end in doubts and perplexities' (xi). These had not wholly vanished in 1922. But he was equally conscious of the limitations of the dominant logical studies. In academic circles logic was still pursued as the analysis of propositions and judgements, as by Mansel; while in the larger world outside, the prevailing interest was in science, which was understood to include economics, and led, under the powerful influence of J. S. Mill, to a fresh study of induction and the 'methods' of reaching verifiable and reliable statements on causation. What was lacking, Bradley felt, was a critical analysis of judgements, and the inferences which would follow from them, as well as the recognition of the variety and multiplicity of the world about which those inferences had to be made; still more, of what was meant by reality and its relation to any truth we might hope to attain.

All this will help to explain the structure and contents of Bradley's two volumes. Book One deals with judgement—categorical, hypothetical, negative, and so on—and the principles of identity, contradiction, and the excluded middle. Book Two discusses the general nature of inference, as a perception ensuing on a synthesis; it accuses the major premiss of the syllogism of being a superstition, and passes on to the criticism of the theory of the association of ideas and the inductive methods of

⁵ The pagination in the two vols. of *P.L.* is continuous.

proof, with a reference to Jevons's *Equational Logic*. Book Three enlarges the scope of the discussion of inference as an ideal experiment, and leads to the description of the final essence of reasoning, 'to arrive at the whole of reality, as a synthesis of its differences immanent in each difference'; it concludes with a consideration of the Cause and the Because, and the Validity of Inference. These points, and some others, e.g. Absolute Truth and Probability, and Theoretical and Practical Activity, are further dealt with in the Terminal Essays in the latter half of the second volume.

THE REAL—MILL AND JEVONS

The aim of reasoning is thus to arrive at the whole of reality. What then is the real? Bradley replies fearlessly, it is the individual. But the individual is a genuine universal, especially if it exists in time and space. It is an experience; but not merely an experience of the here and now. All that I can know or that I can embody in a judgement goes to form an experience for me. It is my 'cross-section' of reality; 'that part of the content of consciousness' (to quote Rudolph Metz) 'which the mind has arrested and therefore taken out of the time-order'.⁶ Hence, 'no idea can be real' (46). The study of reality, therefore, and the study of logic, must begin at the same point, with judgement. 'All judgements are alike universal' (192). The subject of every judgement is reality, or the whole. To affirm that S is P is not to deal simply with two particulars, but to assert that in the universe, as I can conceive it, S and P can be placed, in some fashion, side by side. The singular judgement 'asserts the existence of its content, and does affirm directly of the real' (93). 'It makes its idea the adjective of the real Universe' (628) and, as such, it implies inference. Judgement is always in effect universal. It is the act which refers an ideal content,

⁶ *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, p. 221. > —

recognized as such, to a reality beyond the act (56). It is not the assertion of inclusion in a class, or exclusion from it. It is not the joining of two ideas. Since the subject of a judgement is always reality, the universal judgement is not categorical but hypothetical. As an ideal construction, it is, like the content of our perception, an adjective of reality, and it is 'valid and true of the real world' (75).

Of course, this, like all intellectual operations, rests on an assumption. The assumption is that what is ideally the same is really the same. But, if we refuse to make it, logic falls to the ground. Hence, the error of the fashionable British theory of the association of ideas, false alike to logic, as Bradley asserts, to psychology, and to metaphysics. It is not similars but universals that are reproduced. It is not the case that one red object, or virtuous action, reproduces or recalls another. It is redness or virtue that we find in both. Unhappily, our teachers have misled us, Bradley complains, even in analysing the mental life of the child. How is the child to suppose that Monday's image of a piece of sugar and Tuesday's sensation are the same? The 'goddess of primitive credulity' whispers in its ear that the thing which has happened once will happen once more. But at last 'her fallacies become suspect. . . . So she shakes her wings, and flying to the stars, where there are no philosophers to guide us, leaves us to the guidance of—I cannot think what' (324).

It would take too long to follow out Bradley's criticism of the accepted logical categories; how, for example, 'the necessary must remain the probable', since 'facts for logic must be facts that *are* and that never *must be*' (206), and how the negative judgement is never a mere negative; negation must rest on some assertion; it must have a positive ground; 'our denial will start from a discrepant quality and character' (117). Of more importance for

Bradley's general position is his discussion of the basis of the contrary and the contradictory, and the principle of the excluded middle. Bradley's view follows directly from what he has already said on negation. The contrary is real, not the contradictory. 'The contrary is always the base of the contradictory, and the latter is the general idea of the contrary. Not-A is any and every possible contrary of A' (146). Hence it is necessary to keep the principle of the excluded middle within its somewhat narrow limits. We learn nothing from the assertion that A is either b or not-b, unless we are either assured of the existence of A or regard it simply as the meaning of a word; and even then we may find that b and not-b flow into one another. All we can say is that 'you must be right in either affirming or denying any suggestion that is made about that' (154). But the whole structure of the dialectic of idealism is built on the fact that in the realm of reality we can never be satisfied with an either-or.

A similar attack is made on Mill's 'methods'. These rest on the idea of cause, riddled so unmercifully, and so hastily, by Hume. The series of causes, as we have been taught to understand it, goes back to a first cause, with which, to escape from a *regressus ad infinitum*, we must be content to stop, but without which there could be no chain of causation at all. Bradley writes: 'A first cause is pure nonsense.' Cause is also essentially effect. Here the modern physicist, though on grounds other than Bradley's, would agree. 'The thread of causation', he proceeds, 'is an ideal unity which we discover and make within the phenomenal flux of the given' (540). It is reached by an ideal analysis. Causality in nature must be distinguished from the conception of cause in psychology; and both, from ground in logic. In these days, when Mill's *System of Logic* is rarely opened save by students of the history of the subject, Bradley might be thought to have been slaying the slain. But the assertion that induction is not *pro-*

was needed in his day, and still perhaps in ours. Science was advancing in all the cheerful confidence of youth, assured that every problem could be solved by it, and every question answered or shown to be irrelevant. On the other hand, Bradley asked from the methods an infallibility to which they made no pretension. After the turn of the century came the discoveries of Planck and Einstein, and the world was faced by conceptions of matter and cause, motion and space and time, with which the methods were powerless to deal, and which, though Bradley did not realize it, were to lead science to knock at the door of philosophy.

But Bradley does not forget to be frank. In one place he confesses that his account of Mill's complete enumeration and the collective judgement is 'very seriously wrong' (368n.). The generous acknowledgement of his debt to Jevons has already been mentioned. 'No living Englishman', he says, 'has done one-half the service to Logic that Professor Jevons has done' (386). Jevons had developed Mill's position in the region of mathematical logic. 'I know no mathematics,' Bradley naïvely admitted, implying, no doubt, that he saw no necessity for doing so. Few indeed save professional mathematicians could be at ease in the rarefied atmosphere into which Jevons invites us, but those who have attempted to struggle with it may at least demand that the mathematician should understand non-mathematical or pre-mathematical logic. It is not always clear whether he does.

REASONING AND REALITY

But what chiefly matters to us all is the operation of reasoning. In that operation we are not dealing with identity or likeness, S is P (how can it be?), or S is like P (what does the likeness amount to, and how can we discover it?). Nor do we argue from particulars to particulars or from generals to individuals. Much of our

reasoning is of a non-syllogistic kind; A is to the right of B; B of C; therefore A is to the right of C. Bradley does not regard this type of argument as a mere logical puzzle (246); he treats it seriously, as on p. 385, where it is used to show the weakness of Jevons's 'machine'. Nor, in short, do we stand outside the world and form our judgements about it, and then move them like pieces on a chessboard to form fresh combinations. The operation of reasoning, says Bradley, is 'an ideal experiment upon something which is given, and the result of this process is invariably ascribed to the original *datum*' (431). It is not our own. That is the meaning of the statement that reasoning has to do with reality. The results which are thus given to us are divined or rearranged or brought into fresh surroundings, perhaps arbitrarily chosen; but it is the 'central sameness' on which we rely. The subject with which we are dealing is at first abstract, vague, unformed; but as our analysis of it proceeds, we discover the internal unity in whose existence we have intuitively believed; and with the advance of our knowledge this unity grows more and more concrete. Thus, paradoxical as it may sound, we move from the abstract to the concrete, not from the concrete to the abstract. 'The premiss from which the conclusion directly comes is not the particular. It is a universal extract, what we call a general impression' (351). Reality is a concrete whole. It is the identity, the universal in my thought, not similarity, that is operative throughout.

Moreover, in all reasoning, we are acted on, as well as ourselves acting. Just as the follower of the dialectical method is conscious of an internal necessity, and driven from affirmation to negation, so, in reasoning in general, we are not our own masters; our conclusion imposes itself on us, and then bids us proceed to recognize the validity of some further step. Yet we are not wholly passive. Though we ascribe the result to the *datum*, we

have played our own part also in reaching it. This, the 'ideal experiment', is a process at once of self-development and of co-operation. We are dealing with a universal; not simply with particulars. But the universal includes ourselves; and it finds itself in us as we co-operate with it, or rather as we take our part in its self-revealing activity. 'The conclusion must naturally grow from the premisses, and cannot in any way be dragged or forced out of them. . . . Every inference would prove unstable unless . . . it were self-development' (493 f.).

REALITY AND REASONING

Empiricism might set all this aside as mythologizing; whether as applied to reasoning on ethics or theology, or regarded as a process of scientific discovery. But it may find unexpected corroboration from scientific investigators. Dr. Michael Polyani,⁷ discussing the subject of Science and Reality, holds that the conditions in which discovery usually occurs certainly show it 'to be much rather a process of emergence than a fact of operative action'. This is true of mathematics; and 'the four phases observed in mathematical discovery, viz. preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification (as Wallas has called them) were found also in the course of discovery in natural science, and they can be traced similarly through the process leading to the creation of a work of art. . . . Among these' (he adds significantly), 'I would include also the prayerful search for God.' At first, we seem to be only guessing; but 'all these processes of creative guesswork have this in common that they are guided by the urge to make contact with a reality, which is felt to be there already to start with, waiting to be apprehended'. Some aspect of nature is 'seeking realization in our minds'. Elsewhere in the same lecture Dr. Polyani speaks of the remarkable 'coincidence' to be

⁷ Biddell Memorial Lecture (1946), in *Synthese*, Vol. V, 134 ff.

noticed when the same theory is hit upon by independent workers. The classical example is found in the theory of natural selection, simultaneously revealed (if the expression may be permitted) to Darwin and Wallace. Bradley lived long before the researches of Jeans, Heisenberg, and Dirac, which Polyani has chiefly in mind; and his interest in the progress of science was mainly to show the futility of Mill's methods. He knew as little of the experiments of Schrödinger as Schrödinger knew of his work on logic. But he would no doubt have observed with satisfaction that his conclusions on the active nature of reality, emerging from the discipline of the schools, should have been strengthened by the self-revelation of reality in the laboratory of the physicist.

FURTHER ELABORATIONS

Between the publication of the first and second editions of the *Principles of Logic*, Bradley was constantly working over the ground that he had traversed, subjecting his own statements to that ruthless criticism which, he claimed, should re-examine all our pre-suppositions. What Bradley regarded as of most value he gathered up into the 'Terminal Essays' printed at the end of the second volume of the second edition of the *Principles*. Inference is there the ideal self-development of an object. We need no longer ask ourselves how S can be P, when it is plainly something else, nor how a relation can be inferred in an individual when it has already been stated of the universal in which the particular individual is included. It is the ideal connexion which constitutes the inference, and 'the sequence is not subject to chance, nor does it belong merely to me'. Thus while no inference is infallible, inference is objectively valid. Again, reality retains in itself, as an ultimate subject, every quality which we loose from it, or relate to it. 'Everything, to be in any sense real, must hold of the one Reality'; so then, 'the universe

is the this, but it is more, and beyond' (660). Thus we pass from inference to the truth of its results. Truths, as the statements of the results we have reached at the time, can never be true, that is, consistent with that whole of reality which we, with our limited experience, can never hope to grasp; a truth, that is, will always be distinct from fact. This relation of truth to reality 'reconciles with the existence of absolute truth the necessary imperfection of all truths' (675). Hence we have a world of relative truth and yet no less certainly we have truth which is absolute (*ibid.*). And it is this absolute truth, as we may come to grasp it, which has for us paramount significance. If, for instance, we were asked which was more important, the truth of metaphysics or the truth that the Normans conquered England, we should have to reply, the former.

CRITICS—ESPECIALLY BOSANQUET

Naturally, the criticisms of the book, after its second as after its first appearance, were vigorous. It was easy to make fun of Bradley if one did not take the trouble to understand him. Thus, G. E. Moore⁸ remarks that when the assertion $2+2=4$ (or, to quote the equation which Bosanquet uses as the typical linear inference, $7+5=12$), it means to Leibnitz, that the mind of God is in a certain state; to Kant, that your mind is in a certain state; and to Bradley, that something is in a certain state. With greater seriousness, James Gibson accused the author of having killed the claim of the philosophy of experience to represent a coherent structure of thought; and mere ideas, or ideas apart from the reference to reality which constitutes judgement, had disappeared. But it is more important for us at this point to notice, what had not escaped the later reviewers, how close was the connexion between the *Principles of Logic* and of Bosanquet's *Knowledge and Reality*, which appeared shortly after Bradley's first



⁸ *Principia Ethica* (1903), p. 125.

edition, in 1885. Bosanquet had come up to Oxford about the same time as Bradley; and he was nearer to Bradley than to the other Oxford thinkers of the day. Much of his book reads, in fact, like a reassertion of the *Principles*. On the relation of thought to reality and on the conception of reality as comprehensive totality, Bosanquet and Bradley are at one. 'Individuality', says Bosanquet, 'is concrete universal; it finds its highest stage in self-transcendence, in the infinite experience of the absolute.' But Bosanquet also accuses Bradley of inconsistency, or rather of a certain unwillingness to adhere to his own position. 'It appears to me', he says, 'that English logic, under the influence of the idealism on which science inevitably rests, has almost outgrown the narrow traditions of its one-sided and so to speak pre-scientific schools. English philosophy now approaches Germany; while in Germany, a reaction is taking place. Bradley belongs to the movement in advance, but attaches himself, in parts, to the German reaction.'⁹

Pressing home this point, J. H. Muirhead¹⁰ has quoted the well-known passage with which Bradley closes his book and protests that the world is left 'more glorious if we feel it is a show of some fuller splendour; but the sensuous curtain is a deception and a cheat, if it hides some colourless movement of atoms, some spectral woof of impalpable abstractions, or unearthly ballet of bloodless categories' (591). Muirhead has asked whether Bradley is not here exposing himself to Bosanquet's criticism, exhibiting a change of front, 'playing fast and loose with a double standard' on the one hand, that of a stable intellectual combination, and on the other that of correspondence with sense-given fact. But the conviction is never absent from Bradley's austerest thinking, that if reality is a self-consistent active whole, every part of it known to our

⁹ *Knowledge and Reality*, p. v.

¹⁰ *Platonic Tradition*, p. 251.

experience has its importance, and that the duty of philosophy is to reveal a universe where every note that has sounded clearly to human ears forms part of the great diapason of the eternal. And justice to its concrete nature can only be done when we summon to its testimony, as Bradley, we must confess, seemed often loath to do, the scientific investigator, the artist, and the saint.

But Bosanquet goes on to urge that Bradley does not uphold the degree and extent of identity by which the content of an idea is for us attached to reality. In relating the individual to the Absolute, he argues, Bradley at first lays stress on the Absolute, as the subject of all judgement, and then falls back on the individual, as Germany, in his view, had been falling back on the earlier English standpoint. This was due, he held, partly to the neglect of the distinction between the psychological and the metaphysical, partly to the allied neglect to keep the intellectual act distinct from its 'linguistic instrument'; the result was an over-reliance on the phenomena of language, as, for example, the English sentence, with its subject, predicate, and copula. The grammatical subject is not necessarily the real subject. We are bound to clothe our thoughts in some kind of language. Language repays us, or retaliates on us, by moulding our thought. It is inseparable from our over-tones. 'There is supposal in the categorical judgement', says Bosanquet, 'before judgement has become abstract.' Moreover, an abstract expression is one thing, our aim in expressing it is another. A sentence such as 'I saw him there yesterday' will have five different meanings as we lay stress on one or other of the five words in it. An assertion is both of belief and of judgement; but belief is psychological, a matter of degree; judgement is logical, in the realm where degrees are not admitted. Bradley is not unaware of the importance of language, by the side of metaphysics and psychology; but he would have us remember that 'to fall back

on language, after all, will not tell us precisely how much passes through the mind, when abstract ideas are made use of.¹¹

It would surely be going too far to accuse Bradley, as Bosanquet does, on the score of this neglect, of agreeing with Newman that assent is both absolute and irrational, or, indeed, of assigning undue weight to that which is given in immediate perception as a guide to the concrete. Bradley was the first to admit the value of his friend's criticisms. He allowed them full weight in the second edition of the *Principles*. If we do not discuss them further here, it is, first, because Bradley's views of the relation of the individual to the Absolute will naturally call for further consideration in the next chapter, and secondly, because, affording as they do a fresh illustration of the tentativeness of much of Bradley's thought, they yet leave the main structure of the *Principles* intact. Bradley, however, always maintained that sense, with all its colour and variety, was not left behind by thought, but was gathered into thought. Reality is not bloodless; it is full-blooded.

PRAGMATISM AND DEGREES OF TRUTH

It will, however, be in place to notice here Bradley's development of his doctrine of truth, in papers which he collected in *Essays on Truth and Reality* (1914), as well as in various articles in *Mind*. These contain also his criticisms of Pragmatism, a pseudo-philosophy, as many others also considered it, which, under the influence of William James in America and F. C. S. Schiller in this country, gained a formidable following soon after the first appearance of the *Principles*. A direct attack on Pragmatism is found in a paper on 'Truth and Practice',¹² to which Schiller replied acidly in the fourth chapter of his *Studies in Humanism* (1907): 'Truth and Mr. Bradley.' 'If it is

¹¹ *A. and R.*, p. 398n.

¹² In *Mind* (1904). , , ,

pragmatism', Bradley had said in his paper, 'that a truth apart from its working is not true, then surely Hegel was long ago the pragmatist *par excellence*'. 'Pragmatism', he continues, 'writes truth for belief', a mistake never made by Bain. 'It is a blind reaction against other views, themselves imperfectly understood.' In an essay on 'Faith', written in 1907, he had spoken of it as 'the attempt to subordinate every aspect of mind to what it calls practice, the meaning of practice not having been first ascertained'. Yet, 'in and for philosophy, truth is true because I have a certain want and act in a certain manner. . . . Philosophy in my judgement cannot verify its principles in detail and throughout. . . . So far as philosophy is condemned to act on an unverified principle, it continues still to rest upon faith.'¹³ 'Because I have a certain want.' But is not that the essence of pragmatism? Far from it, Bradley would reply. All depends on the character of the want. The pragmatist desires something that will work out in 'practice', a theory of atomic fission, for example, or a new gadget in a motor car. The philosopher on the other hand desires a sense of rest and satisfaction in a coherent and comprehensive whole, and this has nothing to do with its working. 'My desire and will to have truth is the desire and will of the world to become truth in me.'¹⁴

But there are degrees of truth, because ideas may work better or worse, and because the interests which ideas subserve are more or less valuable. James, Bradley says, agrees with Hegel that immediate experience is the beginning; this Bradley himself held firmly. But is it the end? The earliest experience is a mere feeling; on a higher level is reached the distinction between subject and object; at the last we can reach 'the idea of a positive non-distinguished non-relational whole, which contains

¹³ 'Truth and Practice.'

¹⁴ 'Truth and Copying', *Mind* (1907).

more than the object, and in the end contains all that we experience', and this 'secures the one ground on which satisfaction is possible'.¹⁵ Yet this satisfaction is never fully attainable for us. We must not regard truth, knowledge, and reality as separate. But for us truth will always be defective. 'It is, and it is not, reality.'¹⁶ Indeed, the opposite of my partial truth is true.¹⁷ Our advance in knowledge consists in further specifying the conditions. Hence, there is no absolute truth, or absolute error. In the absolute or real world, conditions do not exist, or would be meaningless. Nor can time exist there. The sombre words of Omar Khayyám that what the moving finger writes not all our tears can wash away are as false to philosophy as they are abhorrent to the heart.¹⁸ Even here and now we may be said to transcend time. 'My real personal self which orders my world is in truth inseparably one with the universe';¹⁹ a statement which is only valid if both real and true are understood in Bradley's sense.

The last three paragraphs are as much a preparation for *Appearance and Reality* as an extension of the *Principles of Logic*. But they are in their right place here, because the whole contention of the *Principles* is that logical processes are unintelligible apart from the reality which they aim at interpreting or reaching, and by which indeed they are controlled and moulded. Neither judgement nor inference has any importance for us apart from truth, nor has truth apart from reality. We are no longer dealing with the 'common sense' antithesis between thought and things, but with the relation between our thinking and truth, the truth which is at once beyond our thought and yet penetrating it. The logician or the metaphysician

¹⁵ 'Our Knowledge of Immediate Experience', *Mind* (1909).

¹⁶ 'Truth and Copying.'

¹⁷ 'Truth and Coherence', *Mind* (1909).

¹⁸ 'Appearance, Error, and Contradiction', *Mind* (1910)

¹⁹ 'Truth and Coherence.'

is thus where the moralist finds himself when he is driven to religion. 'Truth is reality taken as ideal . . . as an intelligible system' (620). He has reached the end of his pilgrimage while he is still on the road, even if, when his goal is nothing less than the Absolute, the road will never come to an end. It is like the city which was built to music, and therefore never built at all. But it is no mere poet's dream. Granted that the pilgrim in the first place turns his back on the City of Destruction, of associations and similarities, of clear-cut distinctions between positive and negative, of copies of a reality which the so-called copyist has never seen, and that he is driven on by the yearning for a peace of mind which only comes from the vision of unity and wholeness; yet he knows that he is on the right road since the vision is there to guide him from the start.

RUSSELL AND LOGICAL POSITIVISM

What has Bradley done to influence the course taken by logic after him? The most significant name for us among those who have claimed to be logicians in this century is that of Bertrand Russell. Russell, as he tells us in his essay in *Contemporary Philosophy*,²⁰ began by being a disciple of Bradley, but left him in 1898, under the influence of G. E. Moore, who convinced him of the impossibility of equating knowledge with reality. Bradley himself took Russell severely to task for his combination of atomism and pluralism and his denial of internal relations. Russell indeed at times reads like a nineteenth-century Hume. His first great work was the *Principia Mathematica*, produced conjointly with A. N. Whitehead. It was based on the conviction that pure mathematics can be deduced from certain axioms of formal logic, and that properly speaking all induction is deduction! Hence, the logical position which has been worked out independently by Carnap and

²⁰ Vol. I. (1924).

Wittgenstein on the Continent and (with some reservations) by A. J. Ayer in this country, in his *Foundations of Empirical Knowledge* (1947). Carnap states baldly²¹ that formal logic deals with linguistic expressions without any reference to their sense. Logical Positivism (to use the now familiar expression) makes the two claims that the ordinary terms and propositions of logic need to be analysed into simpler propositions from which the ambiguities of language have been removed, and that these simple propositions can be expressed, neglecting their content, by quasi-mathematical symbols.

Various examples of propositions thus converted to equations will be found in A. P. Ushenko,²² where for instance the ancient and not very profound puzzle of Epimenides' assertion that all Cretans are liars, Epimenides being himself a Cretan, is disentangled with the help of nine separate formulae, made up of various arbitrary signs. Russell's advance to Logical Positivism, or, as he prefers to phrase it, the philosophy of logical analysis, is conveniently summed up in the conclusion of his later work.²³ Like Ayer, in the book already referred to, as well as in *Language, Truth, and Logic* (1936), he holds that no statement which refers to a reality transcending the objects of all possible sense experience can have any external significance. All we can assert with any confidence is our own experience of our sensations. We have once more returned to Hume. Metaphysics is thus reduced to meaninglessness. Such a statement has no terrors for Russell and his friends. It is necessitated by the scientific mind, where objectivity is all. Reasoning, in whatever field, must be purged from the fallacies that beset all slipshod arguments. 'One of the few unifying forces is scientific truthfulness, by which I mean the habit

²¹ *Logical Syntax of Language* (1937).

²² *The Problems of Logic* (1941).

²³ *The History of Western Philosophy* (1946).

of basing our beliefs upon observations and inferences as impersonal, and as much divested of local and temporal bias, as is possible for human beings.²⁴ And how much is possible?

Logical Positivism has come to enjoy a popularity and has given rise to a literature beyond anything attributable to Bradley or to Whitehead. It is, as we have hinted, a descendant of Hume's sensationalism, a mode of considering the world to which the English mind, it would seem, is naturally prone. Thought sets itself, positivism informs us, to construct satisfying propositions; and all propositions not founded on or capable of being established through sense experience are unmeaning; e.g. that the sensible world is unreal, or that there is a transcendent God. Metaphysics, therefore, which is wont to deal with such propositions, is itself neither true nor false, but meaningless. On the other hand, propositions founded on sense experience have meaning; but they can never be known to be true or false; they are either probable or improbable. The only true propositions are mathematical or logical; analytic, not synthetic. This is why the task of thought is to analyse propositions; to make them say exactly what they mean; and this involves the use of symbols. As early as 1881, J. Venn, in his *Symbolic Logic*, extending the earlier operations of the quantification of the predicate, had transformed into quasi-mathematical equations the traditional logical forms of propositions, A, E, I, and O, and of syllogisms, *Barbara*, *Celarent*, and the rest. But the process has been carried far beyond Venn by Carnap and Wittgenstein, as the illustrations given by Ushenko will make clear.

If, however, we are to reach what Russell calls the habit of basing our beliefs on observations purely impersonal, we shall have to be prepared for Russell's transformation of the sentence 'Scott was the author of *Waverley*' into 'one

²⁴ *Western Philosophy*, p. 864.

and only one man wrote Waverley, and that man was Scott'; or, more fully, 'there is an entity c such that the statement x wrote Waverley is true if x is c , and false otherwise; moreover, c is Scott'.²⁶ No wonder that Whitehead has remarked²⁶ that if our remote ancestors had been wise positivists they would never have sought for reasons, they would never have apprehended connexions or consequences, and civilization would have ended before it had begun.

Here we are at the opposite pole from Bradley. But Bradley, ignorant or careless as he may have been of mathematics or the progress of science (with which indeed Logical Positivism has very little to do), would have found abundant justification for the rejection of such positivistic claims by refusing, as he did, to welcome 'the detached fragments of explanation attained in our present state of civilization' or to believe that in the presence of nature there is nothing but 'the routine described in physical and chemical formulae'. This rebuke is actually administered by Whitehead,²⁷ who has moved in a very different direction from that of his old colleague. He urges that we must take account of our 'occasions of experience', one of which is 'individual self-enjoyment as a process of appropriation of data'. 'The process of self-creation is the transformation of the potential into the actual' and 'all philosophy is an endeavour to obtain a self-consistent understanding of things observed'. A fuller reference to Whitehead's advance on Bradley will be in place at the end of the next chapter; we may merely observe here that whether Whitehead called his own work logic or metaphysics, he is travelling along the road on which Bradley set out in the *Principles*.

²⁶ *Western Philosophy*, p. 859.

²⁶ *Modes of Thought* (1938), p. 203.

²⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 205 ff.

THE LOGIC OF COMPREHENSIVENESS

If we still hold to logic as a guide to the processes of acquiring knowledge, of theorizing and verification, these, like the whole business of the investigation of our world, are impossible without adventurousness and guess-work, courage, patience, and indomitable faith. Mathematical logic or Logical Positivism may perhaps be applied with some success to those portions of nature which respond to the pointer-index, to movements which can be measured and masses which can be weighed. But these are not the only subjects which concern us. And when we transfer these methods to the no less important studies of poetry, ethics, law, and religion, or when we simply reflect that every proposition implies a judgement and every judgement a person, they break down as hopelessly as if we were trying with their aid to bind the sweet influences of Orion. We may measure the heavens; we cannot measure the hopes and fears of the heart. Bradley is right. Logic, to be true to its task, must concern itself with the whole self and the whole universe. And if the universe is, to us, much more many-sided than Bradley hinted, it is none the less Bradley's demand which more recent students of the functions of language are calling us to obey.²⁸

Today, even physics has passed far beyond the 'matter and movement' stage. It has to deal with the four-dimension category of space-time, with movements of light which seem now those of a wave, now of a particle; with quantum mechanics and an apparent indeterminism in the atom; with a continuity that proceeds by jumps; and it has had to give up the task of investigating the structure of the atom for the more complex and promising study of its function. The thing itself, as Russell admits, is a mere logical construction, though all aspects of it are real—

²⁸ See, for example, a paper by F. Waismann, 'The Many-level Structures of Language', in *Synthese*, Vol. V, pp. 211 ff. (1946).

Bradley would have protested against the implied antithesis. What we are really doing is to advance farther in our progress from the original and immediate experience of the individual toward the coherent self-experience of the universe, a universe which includes the emotional and spiritual. Dr. Martin Johnson is aware that besides physical phenomena 'there are other topics of importance in life and with claims to a share in any discussions of reality'.²⁹ In a previous work³⁰ he had argued for the idea of the existence, drawn from the logical study of science, of patterns, comparable to patterns in art and morals, which satisfy 'those other instincts than the purely moral', as if the reconciliation between the logical and the imaginative were not beyond our horizon.

THE LOGIC OF PROBABILITY

Finally, there is one field of logic, industriously worked over at the present day, which we shall pass by with but a brief mention, for the reason that with logic, in the exact sense of the term, it has nothing to do; the logic, so-called, of probability. If we throw a die six times, what are the chances that any one side will turn up twice? In view of the current mortality rate, we may go on, what are the chances that a given individual will reach the age of 65? There is no such thing, for science proper, as chance. The word is a euphemism for what is often an unavoidable lack of evidence. If we knew all the kinetics of the dice box and the dicer, we could presumably tell how each die would fall. If we knew everything about the individual, his past history, his actual physical and mental condition, and all that would happen to him in the future, we could doubtless predict the date of his decease. Without this knowledge we have to rely on actuarial calculations; and these, as everyone is aware, can tell us nothing at all

²⁹ *Science and the Meanings of Truth* (1946), p. 154.

³⁰ *Art and Scientific Thought* (1944).

about the individual, or how long he has to live. All the actuary cares about is the average; and the average man is non-existent.

Bradley discusses both these instances of probability (217 ff.). He points out that for a discussion of probability, that of possibility is a prerequisite. The only statement that can be true about probabilities is that there are so many possibilities or chances, some with more sets of conditions than others; no statement of probabilities can assert a fact or an event. The question of probabilities in morals—is an act more probably right than wrong; and if it is, may we commit it?—Bradley does not discuss. Nor need we. It may be left to the casuists of the school of Liguori. On the other hand, we may have to deal with two rival scientific theories, like the wave theory and the particle theory of light. What is the probability of either of them being true? And if this could be decided on by some enormous multiplication of experiments, at what point would 'probably' be transformed to 'certainly'? If we may believe those who have the best right to speak, no investigator relies on a theory of probability. The genuine investigator is no gambler. He makes his guess. He knows he must be ready at any time to give it up. But he also knows that he must not give it up at the first rebuff; that somewhere the truth awaits him; and though the circumstances that may have to be taken into account are infinite, he can go on and be led from one truth, or one error, to another, until he reaches a point where he can form a judgement that is possible, and he can form no other. And this is to be, *malgré soi*, a Bradleyan.

FROM LOGIC TO METAPHYSICS

But to return to the main subject of this chapter. In his pages on 'The Final Essence of Reasoning', Bradley works out his identification of the two fundamental

elements therein, analysis and synthesis, as guides to the concrete universal. Our goal is a system; but in practice we are condemned to fall short of it. 'Our fresh constituent is dragged up and chained on from the outside. . . . The whole, which we make, is never completed. . . . (The effort to complete its synthesis) leads to that chase of the spurious infinite where fruition, ever instant, is balked perpetually' (488f.). But if in the end it could be reached we should find a system of differences in which synthesis and analysis really were at one.

In these moving words Bradley has given expression to the impulse which drew him through the long and often weary argument of the *Principles*. We can see how no discussion was trivial or beside the mark to him, when it cleared the path to this point of vantage; we can see how the precise and austere discipline of the thinker was in him touched to the yearning of the pilgrim, the yearning which never left him and which he allows himself to reveal in a few passages, as we shall see, in *Appearance and Reality*. In the *Principles*, he never explicitly refers to the Absolute; it is only mentioned in one passage in the 'Terminal Essays', as possessing 'the two characters, of immediate experience and of grounding, both at once and both perfect' (700). But it is easy to see how, having reached the conception of this integrated and comprehensive system, he was ready to elaborate it without being troubled by the elusiveness which he could not conceal or the weaknesses and deficiencies of which, as it would seem, he was never conscious.

'The elements knowing themselves in the whole and so self-conscious in one another, and the whole so finding in its recognized self-development the unmixed enjoyment of its completed nature, nothing alien or foreign would trouble the harmony. . . . This crown of our wishes may never be grasped. . . . The idea may be a dream, or even a mistake, but it is not a mere delusion.

. . . It does represent that which, because it is absent, serves to show imperfection in all other achievements, takes away our rest in all lesser productions, and stirs our reason to a longing disquiet. There has come to us here, shut up within our poor logical confines, and pondering on the union of two abstract functions, a vision of absolute consummation. In this identity of analysis and synthesis we recognize an appearance of our soul's ideal, which in other shapes and other spheres has perplexed and gladdened us; but which, however it appear, in Metaphysics or Ethics or Religion or Aesthetic, is at bottom the notion of a perfected individuality' (489f.).

CHAPTER SIX

THE MEANING OF REALITY

I

THE PERMANENT VALUE OF BRADLEY'S EARLIER WORK

BRADLEY published the *Ethical Studies* at the age of thirty. He was thirty-seven when the first edition of the *Principles of Logic* appeared. He might then be thought to be at the threshold of the maturity of his powers. Many philosophers at that age had produced far more. Berkeley was only twenty-five when he made his mark with his treatise concerning the *Principles of Human Knowledge*. What would have been our estimate of Bradley if he had passed away, leaving only these two books? Few would have felt that either as a moralist or as a metaphysician was he really convincing. And that would not have been all. Both works end on a note of interrogation. Bradley means the reader to feel the uncertainty that he implies in his own mind. Morals are only to be understood in relation to the whole of life. There are no such things as questions of conduct, of right or wrong, of happiness and free will. Morality is coherence with the moral universe.

And yet even that is not enough. To live in that universe, we must transcend it. We must relate ourselves to God, the eternal, the infinite. In doing this we shall be something more than moral; we shall in fact cease to moral. We must be one with God. But there Bradley breaks off. How are we to think of God? As we are taught to think of him in the creeds of orthodox and traditional Christianity? As he has been sought for, and perhaps found, by the mystics? As the redeemer of mankind, who will gradually draw all men to the rapture of

allegiance to his Kingdom? Bradley says enough to show that he is not satisfied with any of these suggestions. If he had known what to say to the questions which he must have guessed that we should ask, he would surely have said it. He leaves us with the vision, the dream, of some sphere in which all contradictions are reconciled, and all desires finally fulfilled or laid to rest.

The *Principles* leads us to a similar result. There we start with the processes of our own thought about the world in which we live, our judgements and inferences; and from the beginning we are confronted with the conviction that our thought is not really about things or events in that world, but with that world as a whole, with reality. Identity is never clear-cut. We can never be content either with the proposition A is A or A is not not-A. Things must be seen together, in their relations to one another, if they are to be seen properly; and since they can never be seen all together by the eye of the human understanding, they can never be seen by us as they are. Reality is the complete coherence of experience. For reality, there can be no contradictions. For us, there can be no truth, nor error. We may advance nearer to comprehensiveness, or fall away from it. But it is there all the while; we ourselves exist in it; and even our advance towards it is the result of its action in and upon us. 'From such imperfect experience as I possess, I not only can but I must conclude to an experience perfect and complete, which, though still experience, includes and is all that is real', and in this 'there is nothing whatsoever which, so far as I can see, stands out as impossible.'¹

But this leaves us with a question, or rather, with two. The first raises once more the ancient puzzle of the relation of knowing to being, and of thought to reality. This is not the same as the older, or, for those who live in a world dominated by modern physics, the newer

problem of the relation of mind to matter. Descartes had long ago defined, as one of the tasks of philosophy, the reconciliation of the two apparent irreconcilables, mind and matter. Spinoza had regarded them as two modes of manifestations of the one substance. Herbert Spencer, who was as far as most people from understanding his own dictum, admitted² that matter can only be explained in terms of mind, and mind in terms of matter, a phrase which an idealist might interpret as meaning that 'matter as it is known to us is created by intelligence by means of relations, out of elements which are essentially mental'.³ Bradley, however, does not greatly concern himself with matter. In Bradley's own day, J. S. Mill could do no more than regard matter as a 'permanent possibility of sensation'. The latest researches into the atom have led to the view that matter is not only indefinable; it is irrelevant. Matter was equally irrelevant to Bradley. The only thing with which we have to deal, as he laid it down, is experience (145, 206).⁴ Yet it is equally evident to him that we must either come to terms with reality, or proclaim the bankruptcy of all thought. Now, if we start with Bradley from experience, taken in this wide sense, it should be clear that we must be prepared to distinguish experience as a whole from our own experience: we cannot identify our own experience with reality. Our own experience may be 'real' for us at one moment; it may have become something entirely different the next. Further, your experience, as far as I can hope to become acquainted with it, may be the very reverse of mine. And without something fixed and reliable, thought is certainly bankrupt.

Since, then, each of us has to do his own thinking and experiencing for himself, there would appear to be as

² *Principles of Psychology* (1870-2), Vol. I, p. 627.

³ C. F. D'Arcy, *Idealism and Theology*, p. 7.

⁴ See p. 56, *supra*.

many reals as there are thinkers. Each man, in the last resort, becomes the maker of his own universe, of all the universe, so to speak, that he has or can have. At this rate, we may be told, we make our own toothaches and our own sunsets as well as our ultimate beliefs. If this sounds absurd, how else do we get our toothache, our delight in the glories of the setting sun, or our faith, either that there is a God, or that there is not?

THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPERIENCE

There is but one answer, according to Bradley; experience, and experience as sentient, is reality. But this reality is not your experience, or mine; it is the sum total of all experience, wherein the changing and clashing experiences of individuals or 'finite centres'⁵ are combined into one harmonious whole, where nothing can be altered because nothing can arise to cause alteration. Reality, which may equally be called, and which Bradley regularly calls, the Absolute, 'holds all possible content in an individual experience where no contradiction can exist' (147). Experience is one indivisible system, harmonious, complete. It is infinitely more than our own experiences. Yet every one of these are gathered up into it. It would be impossible apart from them; they are unreal apart from it. In these words we have the beginning and end of Bradley's philosophy.

If then there is a coherent system of experience which we can call reality, how are we to conceive of it? Is it to be described, as the *Principles* might lead us to suppose, by a set of judgements, each of which takes account of all the facts, or at least the relevant facts, and none of which clashes with the rest? Or can it be reduced to a neat list of propositions, crowned with the soul-less accuracy of mathematics? Or, though it is sensuous experience from which we start, and since we live, not by bread or axioms

⁵ See Chapter 3, p. 55, Chapter 8, p. 183.

alone, but by 'admiration, hope, and love', must we somehow find room in our idea of it for the thousand feelings, suppositions, desires and fears, enthusiasms and hatreds, which make up the lives of most of us?

It must be recognized that for Bradley the confusion which is resolved in reality appears to be logical to a much larger extent than emotional. We ourselves are oppressed by the jarring elements in our own desires and passions, and the endless struggles between contending individuals and groups around us, constantly shrieking against any creed that we try to draw up. The world we live in is irrational. As we say, it does not make sense. Bradley is not insensible of the frustration which confronts all moral and social struggles; but his references to it are rare in comparison with the importance he attaches to the irrationality inherent in our thinking. Still, the amount of space given to each aspect of the question must not be taken as the measure of its significance, either for the writer or his readers.

We close the *Principles* before this point is reached; and it is not illegitimate to guess that Bradley knew this as well as his readers; and that, when he had done with the *Principles*, if he ever felt that he had 'done with' anything in his life, he set himself to the larger task, the largest, indeed, that any man could attack. For until the task is performed and reality is known, or, if that is impossible, until we know what we mean and what we do not mean by the real, we are living in a world of opinions and shadows. If there is no possibility of coming to rest in a reality so conceived, the scientific investigator must toil on from one hypothesis to another, with no criteria to decide on the value of any of them; the moralist will be left with views about the right and the good which are the products of his own character or his idiosyncracies; and the religious man will be forced to ask whether his God is more than the projection, as the phrase goes, of beliefs

which have grown out of the soil of his training, his personal affinities, or his private ideals.

If such an attempt to arrive at what is for us the real is philosophy, every man is a philosopher; he may be a bad or a careless one; so bad or careless that it would be better for him, were it possible, to have no philosophy at all; for here too the maxim holds good, *corruptio optimi pessima*. But no one can get through life without some first principle; even if we pass from one to another, or are unconscious of the existence of any. Our only resource is to attempt a reversal of Gresham's law, and drive out a bad philosophy by a good one.

THE MEANING OF 'REAL'

But we must first be clear as to the meaning of the terms real and reality. Our previous discussion of this meaning has hardly done for us what we need. It is easy to call this or that real; it is not easy to see what it is in this or that which leads us to crown it with so majestic an adjective. Most of us, when pressed, would confess that we know the meaning when we are not asked to state it in so many words. A fact is real; so is a sensation, we say; or an object, like a table or a lump of sugar or a mountain or an earthquake or the sea. But what is the one attribute by virtue of which we allow each one of them to be 'real'? Or we may help out our attempt to define by contrasting the real with its opposite; the abiding as opposed to the evanescent, the genuine as opposed to the imitation; the true as opposed to the false, or the solid and resistant as opposed to the airy and the tenuous. It would be tedious to continue; but if, as in a Socratic conversation, we ask why we call this real and that unreal, we shall find that reality always suggests to us something that 'winna ding'. It is there; a datum, with which we have to do the best we can, but which no effort or patience of ours can alter. Clearly, a great many 'real' things, thus considered, are

not real at all. The greater part of our life consists in making the so-called 'real' unreal; in altering it or adapting it or escaping from it or trampling it under our feet. William Watson, it would appear, was right when he spoke of 'the flowing, flowing, flowing of the world'. Yet, if the world is in a flux, it is still the world; that is, it is at least something distinct from ourselves. And Bradley will not be understood till it is recognized that with him the real cannot be something; it is everything. It includes ourselves; it is the all-embracing whole in which everything of which we or others are or can be conscious, whether we actually call it real or not, has its place.

Reality, the Absolute, the whole, are to Bradley one and the same. As such, reality is the system which contains in itself all experience; for experience is the one thing of which we are sure; and therefore this system is itself experience. 'Anything is absolute when all its nature is contained within itself' (536). It will not escape notice that Bradley is here using experience, as C. C. J. Webb points out,⁶ in a meaning wider than that used by most idealists, and certainly open to misunderstanding. G. D. Hicks⁷ accuses Bradley of using the term in two senses, 'that which is or may be experienced, and a process of experiencing'. But the distinction between these two is not so clear as Dr. Hicks seems to believe. The act and the content of experience cannot be kept apart. What is the first without the second? For metaphysics there is no difference between experienced and experiencer, as Bradley argues;⁸ it is only in psychology that the distinction is justified. But for Bradley, nothing else is real; yet everything partakes in reality or may claim a place in it. Whether we are prepared to try to make sense of this or not, nothing else will make sense of Bradley.

⁶ *Religious Experience* (1945), p. 27.

⁷ *Philosophic Basis of Theism* (1890).

⁸ 'Defence of Phenomenalism in Psychology', *Mind* (1900); *C.E.*, Vol. II, 364.

Still, the reader may be forgiven if he feels that Bradley has not treated him quite fairly. How much is included in experience? We must not think of even our experience as belonging solely to ourselves. For the self breaks up under our hand, so to speak, or slips through our fingers. We must think rather of finite centres of experience.⁹ Ultimately, we always find that we come upon experience,¹⁰ as Hume found that we come upon sensations. Is experience, then, 'sensuous experience' as Bradley expresses it, another word for sensation? It would seem to be, though it is much more. The redness of a rose, or my awareness that a particular rose is red, is for me an ultimate. But so is the pleasure of listening to music, the awe in contemplating an Alpine landscape, the transports of affection, the combination of superiority and dislike which constitute contempt, the healthy delight in the completion of some long-drawn-out labour, and the bowing down of the soul in worship. Whatever else these are, they are experiences, each of them as truly so as the rest. Some of them are comparatively simple; others are bewilderingly complex. None of them can be entirely simple. Our experience of the redness of a rose is affected by the redness of all the red roses we have ever seen. Every single experience exemplifies the power of integrating experiences that operates throughout our conscious and unconscious lives. If Bradley would therefore have us think, in our search for some unified experience which, as distinct from the discords in our own consciousness, is the mark of the reality beyond all appearance, we must recognize that unification is continually and indeed necessarily taking place on our side of reality. To follow the road which thus reveals itself would divert us from our present task, which is one of exposition; but it has been necessary to say so much, to make it clear that while Bradley appears to have in mind the simpler experiences

⁹ See *supra*, p. 124.

¹⁰ *A. and R.*, Chapter 14.

produced by primary and secondary qualities, his view of their place in the scheme of things widens until it embraces the whole of our consciousness and appears even to bridge the gap between reality and ourselves which, it must be confessed, he appears as anxious to bridge as at other times to preserve.

THE INFLUENCE OF ~~THE~~ISM ON METAPHYSICIANS

We have already noticed the continuity of philosophic thought, and the fact that philosophy and religion, with the interest of each in a supreme and ultimate reality, inevitably overlap. Hence has arisen much of the impatience of religion with philosophy. But philosophy on its side must beware of the claims and interests of religion. For the greater part of its history, that is, for nearly two thousand years, philosophy has lived and moved in a religious atmosphere. This could not be said of the Greeks and their pupils the Romans. It is not hereby suggested that the Greeks were atheists. Far from it. A man suspected of atheism, like Socrates, might be condemned to death by a Greek jury. Plato himself would tolerate in his state no man who held immoral views about the gods.¹¹ The difference is that the whole of Western life has been saturated for centuries with certain definite beliefs about God, of which the Greeks, with their Olympian pantheon, knew nothing. To the majority of the more intelligent Greeks, when we pass beyond the realm of superstition, such beliefs about the gods as they held were skin-deep; and the philosopher's 'god' or 'the gods' or 'the divine' had as little to do with Greek or any other religion as had Aristotle's appeal at the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics*¹² that man should as far as possible 'play the immortal'.

With us, for fifteen centuries, religious beliefs have been in the blood. Philosophy, even at its proudest, cannot shake itself free of religion. It cannot silence the question,

¹¹ *Laws*, Book X, Chapter 1.

¹² Book X, Chapter 8.

'What thinkest thou of God?' But this is not necessarily an asset either to philosophy or religion. It may turn the philosopher, who cannot escape the atmosphere he breathes, into an apologist for a certain Christian belief, whether orthodox or not, or into an assailant of received theism; or it may supply him with a convenient term for a being or power which has little or nothing in common with what the same term will suggest to the majority of his readers, who will wish to discover how far his system can be reconciled with their beliefs. It is almost impossible for one who has been brought up in a Christian atmosphere (using the adjective in its intellectual and not merely its religious or conventional sense) to keep the attributes of the God of religion from flowing over to the God of philosophy; and the assumption that what holds for the God of philosophy will hold for the God of religion is as perilous as the assumption that what is asserted of the former must be predicated of what Christians mean by God.

It is difficult to feel that Descartes and Leibnitz and Berkeley were not making use of the Christian conception of God to supply an element without which their systems could not have held together. Kant's argument, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, by which he established the existence of God that had been so badly shaken in his previous work, amounts to no more than saying that if we cannot look to God to provide later on the happiness that the good man misses on earth, the categorical imperative would be a mockery. Nor can it be denied that Hume, in his clever ironical fashion, was thinking quite as much of popular religious beliefs as of purely philosophical heresies. The appeal of so many Western philosophers to what they call God, due, at least in part, to the intellectual atmosphere in which they have grown up, may lead the religious reader to feel that in philosophy there is a place for God, and so to acquiesce in a

conception of God from which all that he rightly valued had been drained off. Philosophy, he may suppose, has come to his defence when it has been undermining his stronghold. On the other hand, he may slip back into a kind of obscurantism which is determined not to identify God with substance or reality as such, whatever it thinks about the ancient teaching that God is truth and life, and makes him either a stranger in the world that he has created or a person in a community of persons, maintaining his position by powers which only exaggerated reverence can call omnipotent. The proof of what is essential to religion cannot be effected by the simple method of asserting the necessity of a first cause and adding 'this is what we call God'. Religion is not the child of a philosophical *Weltanschauung*. Nor must Christianity forget that it does not only worship a supreme being, but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

GOD IN BRADLEY'S SYSTEM

Bradley, however, cannot be accused of transferring the idea of God which he had learnt from religion to his philosophical system and transforming it, in the process, into something which religion would only with difficulty be able to recognize. The place filled by God in most systems he hands over to the Absolute. So far from confusing the two, he maintains the distinction between them with an insistence which, as some of his critics would complain, is fatal to religion; but which, he would reply, is alone capable of preserving the religious conception of God from 'ruin'. To those who share Bradley's interest in religion—an interest which no one can doubt who reads the concluding pages of either *Ethical Studies* or *Appearance and Reality*—but not necessarily his views on the Absolute, this application of his system will rightly demand special attention. We must turn therefore to the

third of his works, *Appearance and Reality*, the work which, J. H. Muirhead once remarked, 'roused men of all schools from their dogmatic slumbers'.¹³ To most writers on philosophy who have perceived Bradley's importance, this book is their source for his system.

Yet did he stand by it? We have already noticed that he was never done with anything that he had written. Relentless to the judgements of others, he was equally relentless to his own. The dialectician who refused to believe in the logical law of contradiction would never believe that his own assertions were final. In a kind of personal confession which he prefixes to *Appearance and Reality*, he not only disarms opposition; he almost frightens away support. 'To love unsatisfied the world is mystery, a mystery which love satisfied seems to comprehend. The latter is wrong only because it cannot be content with thinking itself right' (xv). But 'every truth is so true that any truth must be false' (ib.). 'When . . . twilight has no charm—then metaphysics will be worthless' (4). And this means that 'our conclusion . . . has explained and has confirmed the irresistible impression that all is beyond us' (549). It is imperative to bear in mind such sentences as these (and they are scattered up and down the book) if we are to understand Bradley either as a philosopher or as a man; indeed, how could the two be distinguished? He is so positive because he is so cautious. Recognizing so frankly the shifting ground beneath him, he could afford, he felt, to be dogmatic.

REALITY AND RELATIONS

We might compare his doctrine to an ellipse with two poles. One pole we have already considered; reality as complete experience. The other we might express as the necessary incompleteness of relations. Relations are not reality but appearance. Rightly understood, the two poles

¹³ *The Platonic Tradition*, p. 274.

imply each other. The first thirty-four pages of the book he devotes to this second thesis. He plunges at once into the heart of his subject; and the third chapter ends with the words, 'the reader who has . . . grasped the principle of this chapter will have little need to spend his time on those which succeed it.' 'Who would has heard Sordello's story told.' And what is the principle? Briefly, that the traditional distinction between primary and secondary qualities is without foundation; both are in relation to us, the percipients. The secondary qualities, colour, smell, taste, sound, are clearly in us rather than in the external objects. No one has doubted this since, at least, the days of Locke. But what of hardness, resistance, solidity? These also, urged Bradley, are in us; apart from our senses, we are as ignorant of them as we are of sound and colour. All these qualities exist in relation to ourselves; and we are aware of them only as they are in relation to one another. If they were not thus in relation, if we could discern no difference between them, we should be aware only of identity, i.e. of nothing at all. They have their being in our own experience. We cannot separate or isolate them save by an act of illogical violence. They refuse to be divided into internal or anchored and external or free-floating. The logical positivism of today would have us embody this conclusion in the formula that every scientific statement must express only that of which the speaker is conscious. 'This piece of steel is hard' must be changed to 'this object of which I am aware, and which I call steel, gives me the sensation of what I call hardness.' Well and good, Bradley would reply; it is only when we say that the world is a world of appearances, and it is nothing more, that we err.

But let us express Bradley's contention a little more at length. All qualities are in relation to all other qualities possessed by the object. Qualities and relations imply one another; without relations, qualities have no intelligible

meaning. Or, as he puts it in another way, differences and qualities imply one another; where, therefore, there are qualities, there must be differences, and if there is any difference, that implies a relation (30ff.). Hence, since all our thinking 'moves by the machinery of terms and relations', it can never lead to reality. It plunges us in inconsistency. We wish to take reality as one, yet we have to think of it as many. It is a false abstraction. But what is not reality is appearance. This is how Bradley understands and uses the term appearance. If he gives to it, as he gives to the other term, experience, his own meaning, we must allow him the right to do so. In the whole, reality, all relations co-exist; but as to the way in which appearances can belong to the reality, which is the subject of the second and longer section of the book, we cannot, we are told, expect more than a partial satisfaction. One thing, however, we can be sure of, namely, that relations are internal and never simply external. They cannot be separated from the bundles of qualities which we call things. It is they, rather than the 'things', which go to make up the stuff of reality.

If relations could be merely external, detachable from the 'things' which enter into them, the whole would fall to pieces, and thought would be bankrupt. The distinction between these two kinds of relations, which Bradley seems to make only to override it, would have been clearer if he had vouchsafed to his readers some simple illustrations. In that case, he might have rendered unnecessary the elaborate criticism of Dr. A. C. Ewing. The distinction between internal and external relations has been subjected by Dr. Ewing¹⁴ to a searching examination. He distinguishes ten meanings which can be given to the term relation—such as, reducible to qualities, or implying some kind of unity between their terms, or the causal and logical dependence of one term on

¹⁴ *Idealism, a Critical Survey* (1934).

another. Dr. Ewing has in turn been taken to task by Dr. R. W. Church,¹⁵ who points out that Bradley allows that relations are external to their qualities as well as internal, in the sense both of transcending their terms and acting as a nexus between them.

The only example Bradley brings forward of his contention is contained in his discussion of the two propositions A is A, and A is B. In the first, if it says what it means, there is no difference between subject and predicate; the proposition is sheer tautology. In the second there is difference; then how can A be said to be B?¹⁶ Since there are differences, there are qualities, and these are in relation. Thus A loses its unity; it is what it is not. Dr. Church himself illustrates this break-up of A by cell-fission. The cell is one, and yet it is two; if we compare what it was before the process of fission with what it is afterwards, we think of its unity all the same; if we pay attention to what it is becoming, we think of the loss of its unity. But every idea may be said to undergo a process of fission as we entertain it; the redness of the rose I hold in my hand is the same, and not the same, as all the other reds which I have experienced; and it could not exist for me apart from them; the rose is related in my thoughts, it may be, to hundreds of other roses. So with every other object of thought, we may add, from a perambulator or a kettle to a Minister of State or a war. Each, as Bradley would urge, is a cluster of qualities and relations which elude enumeration and defy every attempt to reduce them to coherence. Not a single proposition we may make about any of them can be relied on. All therefore belong to the realm not of reality, but appearance.

Thus, the importance of relations for Bradley is that though they are not real or true, the Absolute, which is alone reality without qualification, could not exist without

¹⁵ *Bradley's Dialectic* (1942).

¹⁶ See Chapter 5, p. 102, *supra*.

them. What further light does this throw on reality? The answer to this question may best be introduced by a reference to Hegel; 'the things of which we have direct consciousness are mere phenomena, not for us only, but in their nature; and the true and proper case of these things, finite as they are, is to have their existence founded not in themselves but in the universal divine Idea'.¹⁷ 'Every actual thing involves a coexistence of opposed elements. Consequently, to know or, in other words, to comprehend an object is equivalent to being conscious of it as a concrete unity of opposed determinations.'¹⁸ As H. H. Joachim has paraphrased this,¹⁹ 'the many must be for the intellect the self-pluralization of a concrete unity'.

Reality cannot, to Bradley, be understood apart from what Bradley calls appearances. The contrast between the two is as old as the contrast drawn by Plato between being and becoming. But this does not carry us very far. 'Appearance', as Dr. Church says, 'is in becoming.' But not that alone. It is the mark of relations; and therefore of all our knowledge and grasp of truth. But it is a one-sided aspect, over-ruled and transmuted in the whole. The 'what', in anything we consider real, 'points to something beyond, and cannot exist by itself and as a bare adjective' (163). It is constantly changing, approaching or falling away from complete coherence. It exists in time. It is becoming rather than being; yet this does not mean that being cannot be predicated of it. The relations are there; they cannot be explained away. But they are the incomplete in the complete; and between the two there is a gap which can never be bridged; while, from another angle, there is no gap at all. Were there no incomplete, there could be no complete.

¹⁷ *The Logic of Hegel*; trans. W. Wallace (1892), Vol. II, pp. 93 f.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 100.

¹⁹ *Logical Studies* (1948), p. 283.

Again, appearance may be said to be the opposition between fact and idea; fact, in the sense of a limited experience of our own, incomplete, partial, contradicted by other experiences. 'Any part of a temporal series, no matter how long, can be called an event or fact. . . . By *fact* I mean either an event, or else what is directly experienced.' But 'an event itself, as one member in a temporal series, is only itself by transcending its own present existence' (317). 'Existence is . . . a form of the appearance of the Real. . . . To appear, as such, in one or in many events, is to show therefore a limited and low type of development' (400). Idea is the desire for comprehensiveness and unity. It must exist as somehow these facts cannot be said to exist. 'The true fact is fact, only so far as it is ideal' (301). 'The world discordant, half-completed, and accidental for each one, is in the Whole a compensated system of conspiring particulars' (472).

BRADLEY'S EXPOSITION OF REALITY

Reality, or the Absolute, may from what has been said be conceived of as a scheme of all possible relations, the various parts of the puzzle being fitted in to the whole picture and so ceasing to be relations. But it is more. It 'consists in a higher experience, superior to the distinctions which it includes and overrides' (195). Experiences alone are real; but there are degrees of reality. Our own experiences are more or less real as they are less or more partial and limited. All partial experiences 'must be blended in the one experience of the Absolute' (227). That we cannot say how this is accomplished is no argument against it. Indeed, while the Absolute is not its appearances, it 'is real nowhere outside them' (411). It possesses 'everything phenomenal in a harmonious whole' (140). And as all ideas must find a place in the whole, the whole becomes 'the actual identity of idea and

existence' (382), where thought, will, and feeling are at home together. There are no 'bloodless categories' in reality. If appearances are more than Plato's becoming, reality is more than the predicate, or the home of the eternal essences of things; it is the one all-embracing system where all that can be felt or thought has its place, as Dante imagined that in his 'rose of heaven' all the saints had their eternal place in the presence of the eternal love.²⁰

'A poetic dream,' one may comment. But it is nothing of the sort. For, Bradley urges, we cannot form any other conclusion. We must think things together. We may not see how they are together. But this makes no difference. We cannot deny our experiences; nor can we deny those of others. If there is a futile dream, it is solipsism. But no more can we deny that our own experiences give us no rest. We must start from them. They are real for us; far more real than the 'things' which, whatever they are, can only be themselves the appearances which are supposed to cause them. But we cannot keep them isolated any more than we can isolate relations. They baffle us; they allure us; they proclaim that they are parts; they link themselves with other parts. And if they force us to admit that they are parts, they must be parts of a whole, a whole outside of which there can be nothing, because there is nothing that can be left outside it. And since we start from experience and can never leave it behind us, the whole, reality, must have its experience, must indeed be the sum of all possible experience. At all events, as Bradley says more than once, falling back on an argument which is to be met with in the *Principles*, such a reality is possible; it may be; and since nothing else is possible we can be sure that it is. 'What *may* be, if it also *must* be, assuredly *is*' (199). 'Possibility is all we require in order to prove reality' (218). 'We have no basis on which to doubt that

²⁰ *Paradiso*, xxxii.

all content comes together harmoniously in the Absolute.

... That it all [the detail] is reconciled, we know, but how, in particular, is hid from us. But because this result must be, and because there is nothing against it, we believe that it is' (239). We shall have to refer to this mode of reasoning again.²¹

IDEALISM AND THE ABSOLUTE

In all this, Bradley felt himself to be the champion of the way of thinking he had learnt from the German idealists against the dominant materialism of the time and its main representative in England, J. S. Mill. Mill's 'ordinary device', Bradley complained, 'is a crude identification of possibility with fact, of potential with actual existence, the meaning of potential existence of course never being so much as asked' (584n.). This may sound dangerously like the argument summarized at the end of the last paragraph. But Bradley would reply that the meaning of existence is exactly what he had examined, and that potential existence had no meaning at all. Sentient experience, he held, 'is reality; and what is not this is not real'. This much Mill, at least in his earlier days, might have admitted, as Hume had done, in the sense that what did not start from sentient experience could not be knowledge. But, like other English philosophers, he went on, as Bradley accused him of doing, to talk of knowledge as a matter of detecting associations and similarities between things of which our senses make us conscious, and he never came within reach of existence in the only sense in which existence could stand examination, the existence of the whole.

At the same time, it must be pointed out that Bradley was no slavish follower of the accepted German idealism. The Absolute is not like the Kantian thing in itself, unknowable by us and only approachable through the

²¹ See Chapter 8, p. 188, *infra*.

'modes' of time and space. To Bradley both time and space are appearances, like the self, and good and evil. Nor is the Absolute merely the sum of such transcendent 'things'. It gathers up all our experience into itself, and it is beyond us merely because we cannot comprehend totality. Fichte's Ego, only rescued from Solipsism by his illogical doctrine of the '*Anstoss*', has equally little to do with Bradley's Absolute; Schelling never appears to have impressed Bradley. Bradley's approach to the Absolute was, in contrast to Schelling's, like Hegel's, through logic rather than aesthetics. Hegel indeed identified reality with the Absolute Spirit, thought in its widest and most comprehensive sense; but this Spirit was reached as the result of his dialectic system of triads, each synthesis embracing the preceding thesis and antithesis, and becoming in its turn the thesis of another triad. Spirit is the supreme synthesis. In this transparent dialectic, as Joachim has said, 'the whole is eternally analysing and synthesizing itself'. But Bradley made no use of the Hegelian triads, though their influence underlies his own dialectic. He is thus saved from attempting to find them in regions where Hegel's admirers have generally felt that his discovery was only an artifice.

Thought, to Bradley, is not a Hegelian schematic process; it is a matter of relations, to which no limit can be assigned. If both philosophers reach the Absolute, they do so by different paths. What Bradley felt to be his pre-eminent debt to Hegel was the more fundamental idea at the basis of his logic, of the identity between the contradictory and the contrary;²² 'Hegel has taught us this, and I wish that we could all learn it'.²³ Again, in opposition to T. H. Green, relation is the unreal; all relations are 'ruined' from the point of view of reality, from primary qualities to God. Relations, being unreal, can

²² See Chapter 5, p. 101, *supra*.

²³ cf. Dr. R. W. Church, *Bradley's Dialectic*, p. 173.

never attain to coherence or harmony. Even the self, as we shall see, is a bundle of discrepancies. On the other hand, Bradley comes near, in his exposition of the Absolute, to Green's summary of Hegel's main position; 'there is one spiritual self-conscious being, of which all that is real is the activity and the expression; we are related to this spiritual being, not merely as parts of the world which is its expression, but as partakers . . . of the self-consciousness through which it at once constitutes and distinguishes itself from the world.'²⁴ Yet these sentences do scant justice to Bradley's clear-cut distinction between appearance and reality; and Bradley would have hesitated at Green's next words: 'This participation is the source of morality and religion.' Bradley had admitted that he had not mastered Hegel's system.²⁵ Who, except perhaps Hutchison Stirling, would claim to have done so?

In another respect, Bradley seems to fly in the face of his own idealism, as Bosanquet complained of the *Principles*.²⁶ Reality, as we have already observed,²⁷ is grounded in sentient experience. 'For me', Bradley confesses, 'experience is the same as reality' (145). Our own experience begins with immediate feeling, when we are not yet conscious of relations, and when there is no differentiation of thought or will, hardly of likes or dislikes; following on this, relations are forced upon us, and the primitive homogeneity is broken up by the incompatible appearances. The synthesis of them, as has already become plain, is only to be found in the Absolute, whose experience combines them all. But how, for an idealist, can sentient experience be the beginning though not the end? Surely that is phenomenalism. Exactly, replies Bradley; that is what it is. And his defence of the statement

²⁴ *Works*, Vol. III (1889), p. 146; Review of John Caird's *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*.

²⁵ *P.L.*, p. vi.

²⁶ See Chapter 5, p. 107, *supra*.

²⁷ p. 124, *supra*.

rests on what to him is central. In *Appearance and Reality*, Chapter II, he lays it down that phenomenalism is useful for the ascertainment of special branches of truth; but it implies the very reality and identity that it professes to repudiate; if it is taken as a guide to first principles, it transcends or denies itself. In 'A Defence of Phenomenalism in Psychology'²⁸ he defines phenomenalism as confining one's attention to events with their laws of co-existence and sequence. To go beyond phenomenalism is to pass into metaphysics. He adds that what we want in psychology are explanations that truly explain, and above all things, we do not want true explanations!

Reality transcends experience as we know it, just as it transcends relations. But it does not leave either experience or relations behind. It is, as it were, the home of relations, in which they cease to be strangers or rivals, and, gathered into one family, lose their separate existence. The Absolute is not outside us, as if its experience were one thing, and ours another. It is around and within us. The difference is that while our experience is of the 'this', the 'mine', the experience possessed by the Absolute is of everything. The fault of the phenomenologists is that they do not understand phenomenalism.

II

BRADLEY'S TREATMENT OF APPEARANCES

We need not attempt to follow the whole course of the book, or to notice in detail how one aspect of thought or feeling after another, sometimes by Procrustean methods, is reduced to appearance. But the field of appearance is thickly populated. Space and time are both appearance, for both involve contradictions, or, as Kant called them,

²⁸ *C.E.*, Vol. II, 364-86 (1900).

antinomies. Is space endless or limited? It must be, yet it cannot be, the one and the other. Space, moreover, raises once more the question of internal and external relations. Surely, we might suppose that the relation of the billiard ball to the player in space is external. No, the two are only independent by abstraction. 'Neither the things in space nor their space, nor both together, can be taken as substantial. . . . The merely external is, in short, our ignorance set up as reality' (577). Time involves a before and after, and this is to reduce it to a matter of relations, which in the end is nothing. What we call duration reduces us to a number of 'nows', 'and in the end, these "nows" prove undiscoverable' (41). Bradley confesses that his treatment of these two subjects is very brief—too brief, at least as regards the second, for the important issues which are seen later on to depend on it, and which will call for more detailed discussion in Chapter Nine. The same haste and even superficiality is noticeable in the treatment of causality. Bradley does not indeed speak of the idea of cause and effect as introduced by the capricious action of the mind into the unrelated sequences which we observe in nature. But he holds that we are all agreed in seeing in causation 'makeshift and merely appearance' (56), and that if we imagine it to be anything more, it must be at once continuous and not continuous (60-1).

THE SELF

It will be worth while, however, to give more attention to the fashion in which Bradley treats the three subjects of the self, good and evil, and God, finding each of them also, disconcertingly, to be appearances. To the self, its meanings and its supposed reality, Bradley devotes two long chapters, which to many readers will seem less satisfactory than the account of the self in *Ethical Studies*.

He dismisses the self, whether as resting on feeling or self-consciousness, on activity, thought, or will, with a vigour which at times suggests that rhetoric is coming to the aid of misgiving. Yet, as he urges, the search for the self carries us from point to point of uncertainty. Is it a cross section of all our thoughts and feelings at a given moment of our life? If so, the cross section of the next moment may contradict the cross section of this. Is it what is common to all the cross sections? But this is undiscoverable. What is to be made of 'this creature, lost in illusions, bereft of memory, transformed in mood, with diseased feelings enthroned in the very heart of his being' (81)? Moreover, it is impossible to separate ourselves from others who have influenced us, and become a part of us in a hundred different ways. A self which is regarded as a monad outside the flux of our conscious lives, and contemplating them, cannot be called indeed a real existence. And since such monads, if they exist, must be in relation to other monads, the fact of their relations destroys their reality. The attempt to divide the objective from the subjective breaks down, as each persists in flowing into the other; to separate the self from its changes or expansions is equally impossible. As little, Bradley asserts, can the self be identified with its interests, or, on the other hand, with some 'physical fact which remains outside any purpose to which at any time physical fact is being applied' (102). The self, doubtless, is a 'fact'; but it is not for that reason real. Bradley does not here enlarge on this distinction; but, he asks, how does any conception of the self, with its increasing diversity, help us toward reality? It is 'a mere bundle of discrepancies' (120); every effort to find in it a unity breaks down; it is appearance. Bradley does not refer to freedom, as a mark, or an achievement, of the self. He does not allude to his own diagnosis of the freedom of the will in *Ethical Studies*. Will, indeed, he considers as a possible ground of the self, or of the Absolute;

but, as he finds it burdened with all the 'difficulties about the beginning of change and its process in time' (115), he subsequently dismisses the appeal to will, in a sentence in the Appendix, as 'an uncritical attempt to make play with the unknown' (483). True, 'a self, or a system of selves, is the highest thing that we have'; but no attempt must be made 'to set up the finite self as in any sense ultimately real, or again as real at all outside of the temporal series' (558 f.).

EVIL AND GOOD

The discussion of evil, again, as of good, is disappointingly brief. We must deal with it shortly here, reserving a fuller consideration for the next chapter. Like so many other philosophers, Bradley is open to the pregnant reply of Anselm to Boso; *nondum contemplasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum*; you have not yet realized the dreadful burden of sin.²⁹ He does not fall back on Leibnitz; he does not attempt to meet Schopenhauer; nor does he take seriously his own jocular parody of optimism: 'The world is the best of all possible worlds, and everything in it is a necessary evil' (xiv). But the reader will feel that he would have a better right to his own comfortable conclusions if, with Browning, he had stared at the sinner's loathsome features, and then 'let the wretch go festering through Florence'. He contents himself with considering the three forms of evil—pain, frustration, and immorality (198–203)—as they are affected by the doctrine of the Absolute. For the Absolute, what we think of vaguely as pain may be really pleasant; frustration is merely the failure of our own ends, which may have no existence outside us; and immorality is only a problem for those who forget that morality³⁰ struggles to transcend itself and to rise beyond good and evil to the Absolute, to

²⁹ Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I, xxi.

³⁰ cf. Chapter 4, p. 84, *supra*.

which, as to Aristotle's god, the predicate moral cannot be applied.

What then of good? If evil is an appearance, is good an appearance also? This Bradley asserts.

*'The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound. . . . Why rushed the discords in but that harmony should be prized?'*³¹

Bradley will not allow the distinction. He examines the different accounts that can be given of goodness. It cannot be confined, he agrees, to the sphere of the moral. Its essence is approbation. All forms of excellence, including physical excellence, are good. And among these forms of excellence is morality. Like the rest, it is a gift (438). But no forms of excellence will survive criticism. Pleasure will not, as the *Ethical Studies* had already demonstrated. And in all kinds of excellence we are confronted with that opposition of existence and idea (410) which is the essence of appearance. We strive to be what we are not, and when we have reached the goal, another height forbids us to rest. With complete satisfaction there could be no desire, and no goodness. This is especially true in the moral realm. It does not indeed mean, as Rashdall interpreted it to mean,³² that we have to act on moral distinctions which we know are false. Yet these distinctions are only provisional; and, whether we like it or not, Bradley would reply, we must recognize this, or morality will disappear.

And the conclusion that goodness is only appearance is reinforced by another argument. We may begin by recalling what was said on morality in relation to religion in *Ethical Studies*.³³ Morality rests on two poles, self-realization and self-abnegation. Since the self is only appearance, however, these two continually flow into one another; but the identity between them is never

³¹ Robert Browning, *Abt Vogler*.

³² *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1922).

³³ See Chapter 4, pp. 83 ff. *supra*.

complete. The moral man strives and must strive to get beyond morality. Hence the moral duty not to be moral, which is only another way of saying that it is a duty to be religious (441). Bradley thus takes the step that he has taken at the end of *Ethical Studies*, from morality to religion. But the step is now seen to be a more momentous one. The good will has ceased to be the concrete universal that it was,³⁴ for religion means an attitude to God, the supreme power and authority. It thus becomes necessary, in view of the Absolute as the sole reality, to decide whether God also is to be thought of as appearance.

Bradley's view of God as appearance

All will depend on what is held to be the nature of God. Before we worship God, we must understand him. In all this, Bradley offers a curious contrast to McTaggart, the champion of Hegelianism in Cambridge a generation later. C. D. Broad, a close friend of McTaggart's, but no sympathizer with his philosophy, once wrote that 'Hegel was the prophet of the Absolute; Bradley its chivalrous knight; and McTaggart the devoted and extremely able family solicitor'.³⁵ McTaggart's warm nature reversed the well-known maxim, *abeunt studia in mores*. More interested in persons than relations, and open to all the impulses of friendship and affection, McTaggart came to the conclusion that the Kingdom of Heaven was a perfect society of ultimately related persons. This meant that he definitely gave up any belief in God, either as appearance or reality, but was firmly convinced of the personal survival of death. But how, Bradley would ask, can we conceive of persons without personal relations? How can persons exist save in their relations with one another? Whether these survive death, we can only guess (500 ff.). In them, too, existence and ideal are distinct. They are appearance, and only in the Absolute can they find their place.

³⁴ *E.S.*, p. 107.

³⁵ *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1917-18).

Perhaps Bradley sat more closely to his early training than McTaggart. McTaggart too was bred in a parsonage. Bradley would never have called himself an atheist; and religion, even if, in his dialectic language, an appearance, was a subject which he would never allow philosophy to by-pass. Religion, indeed, is to him 'the attempt to express the complete reality of goodness through every aspect of our being. And, so far as this goes, it is at once something more, and therefore something higher, than philosophy' (453). It would seem to be only a step from this to the words of Erigena, '*quid est aliud de philosophia tractari nisi verae religionis . . . regulas exponere?*' Philosophy is the exposition of the rules of genuine religion.³⁶

On the other hand, Bradley had nothing of the mystic in him, as mysticism was cultivated by Erigena or anyone else. True, the mystical writers often use language about God which Bradley might have used for the Absolute, 'a sheer mere absolute one, sundered from all two-ness'. But the passionate longing for union with 'the One Eternal Will of God', and the apparent belief in its possibility expressed, for example, in *Theologia Germanica* (Chapter 27), soars far beyond what Bradley found in his contemplation of the harmony of the Absolute, or the satisfaction that he could hope for from religion.

'In religion', said Bradley, 'we must try to please, or at least submit our wills to, the object which is feared.' With this will go the feeling of our own worthlessness in comparison. The object of this fear, approval, reverence, will be 'for us a Deity' (439 n.). Religion at its highest, he goes on, is devotion to the one perfect object which is utterly good (440 n.). To this perfect expression of a supreme will everything must be good; what we call good and evil alike. The contradiction might seem to be removed. But is it? If it were, religion itself would cease; for the religious, like the moral consciousness, 'rests on the felt unity

³⁶ *De Divina Praedestinatione*, cap. i.

of unreduced opposites' (443), that is, it is an appearance; it oscillates between hope and fear, dread and confidence. And God himself, for religion, is in no better plight. He stands over against man, in relation, or rather in two contradictory relations, to him. Bradley is confident that 'a God that can say to himself "I" as against you and me is not defensible as the last and complete truth for metaphysics. . . . Religion is throughout a two-sided affair.'³⁷

And, once more, if the contradiction is regarded as suppressed, religion disappears. On this point, Bradley is equally confident: 'We cannot rest in a God who is no more omnipotent than one of ourselves, and who, though animated, I dare say, by the best intentions, cannot answer for the unknown force which confronts himself and us.'³⁸ I must, as he writes elsewhere, beware of 'preachers of a new gospel who seek to put me off with a cheque drawn on their account with Moses and the prophets'. This could end only in insolvency. On the other hand, if God is all in all, that is, the Absolute, he is no longer the God of religion. 'Shocking as this conclusion may be', Bradley asserts, 'we are led to it by metaphysics; and the refusal to follow that guide, unhappily common among English thinkers, is the source either of confusion or hypocrisy.' 'A religious belief founded otherwise than on metaphysics, and a metaphysics able in some sense to justify that creed, seems to me what is required to fulfil our wishes. . . . This I cannot expect to see, on the other hand I cannot regard it as impossible.'³⁹ Yet 'if English theologians decline to be in earnest with metaphysics, they must obviously speak on some topics, I will not say ignorantly, but at least without having made a serious attempt to gain knowledge' (452).

³⁷ *E.T.R.*, p. 432.

³⁸ 'Truth and Practice', *Mind* (1904), p. 316.

³⁹ *E.T.R.*, p. 446.

THE ABSOLUTE ONCE MORE

In the Absolute, then, is the unity of idea and existence of which religion by itself can never assure us. It has a place for the relative, and for the struggle which plays so large a part in our existence. But the struggle in the end is laid to rest. In spite of the doubts and perplexities to which he does not shrink from referring, Bradley has no doubt whatever that his conclusion is certain. 'It is impossible rationally even to entertain the question of another possibility.' As regards the survival of death, and, more trenchant, the existence of souls in the Absolute, Bradley is less confident, and less interested. He brings forward the doctrine of finite centres, elaborated in the subsequent essay on Julius Caesar already noticed.⁴⁰ These, he holds, must survive, since in the Absolute is 'an all-pervasive transfusion with a re-blending of all material' (529). In an essay in *Mind* (1909), he writes: 'Not only in love and worship does the union with God hold, but in will also, and in the knowledge and enjoyment of beauty and truth. . . . Our truth, such as it is, has its indispensable part in the one transcendent Experience, and is so far secure' (p. 508). And as for personality, we ourselves strive to pass beyond our personality, so that the Absolute can only be called super-personal (531). 'All is beyond us.' 'Reality is in the end inscrutable.' But (these are his concluding words) 'the more that anything is spiritual, so much the more is it veritably real' (552).

There will be few who do not close the book with a shudder at the bleakness of the Absolute on the one hand, and, on the other, at the cold variety of a world, including their own existence, from which all reality has been emptied out, and only appearance is left. And for such an impression, Bradley is, at least in part, to blame. His

⁴⁰ Chapter 3, p. 55, *supra*.

vigorous critical method keeps his writing in the world of abstract terms. In the laborious discussion of relations and qualities, how much we should have valued something that comes nearer to the heart than, say, red-hairedness as an example of a relation that is not merely external (580); as we should have valued, in the minute examination of the variants of S is P in the *Principles*, some such examples of propositions drawn from the world of living interests as Bosanquet gives us constantly in his *Essentials of Logic*. But apart from the peril of diverting our minds to details, Bradley would probably have been surprised at such a complaint. He at any rate was convinced that the fact 'that the glory of this world in the end is appearance leaves the world more glorious'.

To him, the sensuous was no cheat. He may be accused of leaving no place for the activity of the beehive or the flight of the homing pigeon, though he does not forget the devotion of the dog to its master; but he is certainly aware of what Henry James called 'the multitudinous pressure of all human constructions and pictures, the surge and pressure of life'. And, as we have seen, he maintains the existence of the Absolute, not only because it is a logical necessity, but because he is enabled thereby to bear the weight of what would otherwise be an unintelligible world. Convinced as he was of the splendour of an Absolute in which all experiences found their home, why should he trouble to descant upon it? The Absolute does not abstract reality from appearances, but confers it on them. Bradley might have smiled at Shelley's eager contention that 'the gross psyche of each of us, as well as the still grosser body, draws its vitality from a deeper source which is not divisible into thee and me and them, and is inseparable from the principle of cosmic graciousness from which beauty, goodness and the true do all proceed'.

Veil by veil evil and error fall.

But undoubtedly he knew the lines in which Wordsworth speaks of

the one
*Supreme existence, the surpassing life,
 Which, to the boundaries of space and time . . .
 Superior and incapable of change
 Nor touched by weltering of passion is,
 And hath the name of God.*⁴¹

THE ABSOLUTE AND THE VALUES

'Beauty, goodness, and the true.' In *Appearance and Reality* as in *Ethical Studies* Bradley has little to say of the Values, which Sorley, Inge, Laird, and others have made current coin in subsequent philosophical discussions, notably the three values emphasized above by Shelley. Goodness, he has urged, is only appearance, like evil. Truth is conditional, and can never possess complete validity. Beauty, as one of the forms of human excellence, is good; so is luck! Beauty, too, as 'the self-existent pleasant' (464), stands in a definite relation to the mind; but it falls short of reality; it is determined from the outside, by a quality in the percipient; hence, beauty too falls into the realm of appearance. Yet there is beauty and terror and majesty in nature; appearance is not illusion; and beauty, like all appearance, is gathered into the Absolute. In an essay published in 1904, 'Truth and Practice', occur the words: 'Wherever is love, morality and religion or beauty and truth, I have a product which is more than a mere quality of what is altered; I have something which so far goes beyond practice', beyond, that is to say, what, taken by itself, is unreal. In another essay, four years later,⁴² he identifies the world of reality and the world of values; but these values, like goodness and truth, are

⁴¹ *Prelude*, Book VI.

⁴² 'Floating Ideas and the Imaginary', *Mind* (1908).

everywhere measured by degree and not judged absolutely. Bradley would never have regarded these three values, or the others which he ranks with them, as existing in their own right, or as an argument for belief in God or the Absolute. They are too dependent on our judgements and feelings; and even if (which is doubtful at best) all men everywhere regard some forms of what we may call goodness, truth and beauty as sources of satisfaction, they arouse discord rather than harmony. They remain appearances.

Those who are genuinely anxious to grasp Bradley's conception of reality may be forgiven if the impression left by his description is largely negative. It is easier to come by the meaning he attaches to the world of appearance. The main difficulty with the latter is its inclusiveness. Is there anything which we can experience, using the word in the wide sense in which Bradley understands it, to embrace physical sensations, emotions, and all our points of contact with the spiritual world, parental love, rapturous worship, God himself, which is not appearance? As for reality, on the other hand, everything that we should wish to regard as real is pushed back into an unapproachable realm. Those who would take Goethe's noble words as their rule of life, 'to purge oneself from the half, and live in the whole, the good, the fair', would be reminded by Bradley that the good and the fair cannot be identified with the whole. But it ought to be clear by this time that even if we cannot follow him here, he is not giving up either the good or the fair. These things, he would say, are worthy of all the nobility with which human devotion has ever clothed them; but, apart from the whole, they can never give the satisfaction which we promise ourselves from intercourse with them. They are just beyond our reach; or, to change the figure, something else sweeps aside our outstretched hand. They are but half-gods. We are made for the infinite, the unlimited.

Whether we can hope to reach the goal in this or any existence is beyond the reach of prophecy. It is ours to be satisfied with nothing less, and to stay our souls on the assurance that the Absolute exists. 'You stand on an absolute principle, and, with regard to this, you claim, tacitly or openly, to be infallible' (512).

After the second and enlarged edition of *Appearance and Reality* (1906), Bradley confined himself to the publication of detached essays, most of which appeared in *Mind*. Eleven of these, with four others, were collected in *Essays on Truth and Reality* (1914), introduced by 'a preface to an unpublished work' dated 1906. This volume has a definite scheme and unity of its own. It falls into six sections, which might be labelled: A Philosophical Summary (I-III), Pragmatism (IV, V), Experience and Coherence (VI-VIII), Mr. Stout and Mr. Russell (IX, X), Truth, Memory, and Reality (XI-XIV), and God and the Real World (XV, XVI). But though Bradley never ceased to revise and modify his printed opinions, these essays do little to alter his main positions, and where necessary we have already appealed to them. With the aid of the posthumous volume, *Collected Essays*, the student of Bradley is freed from the labour of referring to many of those contributions to periodicals to which Bradley is rather irritatingly in the habit of alluding.

BRADLEY AND WHITEHEAD

He founded no school; he had no avowed followers and few exponents, even though it is perfectly true to say with Metz that his thought 'is deeply rooted in the philosophy of his age and the tradition of his country'. If indeed he might be said to have a follower, it would be A. E. Taylor, the author of *Elements of Metaphysics* (1903) and *The Faith of a Moralist* (Gifford Lectures, 1926-8). Taylor, who started from a more negative position than that of

Bradley, moved in his later years into the haven of a cautious orthodoxy. But his definition of the Absolute⁴³ recalls Bradley: 'That structure of the world system which any and every rationally consistent purpose must recognize as the condition of its own fulfilment.' In his preface to the 1924 (seventh) edition of *Metaphysics*, he writes: 'In speaking of creatures as appearances of the Absolute, I mean what St. Thomas meant by the doctrine that they have being by participation', an assertion which would have surprised Bradley; yet he speaks, touchingly, of all he owes to Bradley, a debt, 'if anything, deeper now than in 1903'. But Bradley's general service has been to rouse thought rather than communicate ideas. And this lengthy chapter may fittingly be closed by a reference to A. N. Whitehead, who perhaps stands nearest to him in contemporary thought.

Whitehead, to whom we have already had to refer,⁴⁴ began with mathematics. As joint author with Russell he produced the profound and difficult *Principia Mathematica* (1910-13), from which Logical Positivism was to spring. But when he leaves this mathematical view of the universe of thought behind him, he passes to his metaphysics through a wide knowledge of modern science. He suffers, especially in his later books, from an extreme obscurity of language. He invents his own vocabulary, with which the reader has to make what terms he can. But the main principles of his thought can be gathered from the comparatively easy works, such as *Religion in the Making* (1926), and *Modes of Thought* (1938). Like Bradley, he is impressed with the 'togetherness' of things; but this does not mean for him the transcendence of appearance in an unchanging Absolute, as much as the continual emergence, in a world of events and processes, of actuality from potentiality. Life is creative activity and aim, which must include absolute self-enjoyment,

⁴³ *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 53.

⁴⁴ Chapter 5, p. 115, *supra*.

every act of such immediate self-enjoyment being an occasion of experience.⁴⁵ The actuality of the supreme being, or God, therefore, 'is founded on the individuality of its conceptual appetite'. God is the complete harmony of the world, or 'the one systematic complete fact, which is the antecedent ground conditioning every creative act'.⁴⁶ The world is becoming; each event is vitalized with the past and pregnant with the future; the world is thus charged with creative activity. But since this, by itself, is unlimited possibility, which would issue in chaos, it is restricted by God, who is the supreme creative activity, to order and limitation; thus creative activity streams out from God to the world, and returns to him; God may be said to transcend the world as the world transcends God.⁴⁷

Whitehead's God, it will thus be seen, comes very near to Bradley's Absolute; each has experience, and for each that experience means enjoyment. But while the notion of creative process appeals naturally to minds which desire to rationalize the distressing clash of identity and diversity in the world, Bradley would ask, as he did of its earlier champions, what is the end of it; if it has an end, it is itself only an appearance; if it has none, it is unintelligible.

Metaphysics, Whitehead would remind us, 'seeks to discover the general ideas which are indispensably relevant to the analysis of everything that happens'.⁴⁸ 'To emphasize the urgency of this task and the possibility of its fulfilment, was the service which Bradley rendered to his own and succeeding generations, as he pointed, in H. H. Joachim's words, to 'the timeless dialectic which is both absolute knowledge and absolute truth'.

⁴⁵ *Modes of Thought*, p. 205 f.

⁴⁶ *Religion in the Making*, p. 154.

⁴⁷ *Process and Reality* (1929), pp. 492, 606, 620.

⁴⁸ *Religion in the Making*, p. 84n.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ERROR AND EVIL

THE OBLITERATION OF DISTINCTIONS IN THE ABSOLUTE

WE have already noticed the significance of Bradley's distinction between God and the Absolute as of primary importance for those who, while prepared to find guidance or illumination in his system, are not prepared to surrender their belief in theism. An adequate consideration of this distinction will involve going farther into what is implied by Bradley's description of the Absolute than he actually chooses to conduct us. Before doing this, however, we must return to another matter which forced itself on our notice in the last chapter, and which, in the eyes of many, would be enough to make all further attention to Bradley needless; namely, the assertion that truth and error, good and evil, are only appearances; that each has as much or as little place in reality as other appearances; and that therefore the distinction between truth and falsehood, good and evil, and even between right and wrong, is non-existent. Actually, the obliteration of these distinctions is the chief count in the attack of its critics on pragmatism. Among the foremost of these critics was Bradley. How was it possible then for him to range himself on their side or to expect to commend to us a view of the universe which irons out an opposition equally essential, it might be thought, to philosophy and to morals? The third of the great triad of values, beauty, is not discussed at equal length by Bradley, but from the references he makes to beauty and ugliness, the distinction between them would have little better chance of survival.

The theist is for the most part occupied with the problem

of evil rather than that of error or of ugliness. Of error, he is mournfully aware, and he knows that it has to be overcome; but he seldom asks in what sense it can be said to exist or how the non-existent can be said to be existent, pressing as that question was as far back as the fourth century B.C. Nor does he often ask how the fact of error or falsehood can be reconciled with the supremacy of the God of truth. What he wants to know is how evil is to be reconciled with the supremacy of a deity who is held to be supremely good. The two questions, however, really imply one another; and to those who have learnt to appreciate the value of truth, the first is as important as the second. But this is not the form of the question with which Bradley has challenged his readers. His interest in God, deep as it is, is secondary to his interest in the Absolute, reality as a whole. Confronted with the Absolute, then, both error and truth, evil and good, are appearances. Each has its right to a place in the Absolute. Each 'belongs to reality'; but 'cannot be accepted by reality'. What is true of error is true of evil. There is 'one great whole, in which evil, and even ends, as such, disappear' (201). But error and evil are distinct, psychologically and metaphysically; and it will be convenient to consider them separately, as Bradley does.

ERROR AS PARTIAL TRUTH

Let us then turn first to error. Error, in fact, 'is truth, it is partial truth, that is false only because partial and left incomplete' (192). 'Error is truth when it is supplemented' (195). Error is 'lost in higher truth to which it was subordinate, and in which, as such, it vanished' (200-1). The above quotations are enough to show that Bradley was no pragmatist. Indeed, it would be rather absurd to suggest that for so passionate a defender of his own tenets, the distinction between truth and falsehood did not exist. The contention is self-contradictory. In the very act of

asserting the falsehood of the distinction, the pragmatist himself is asserting what he holds to be a truth against what he holds to be a falsehood. Nor does Bradley for a moment discourage us from combating error or discovering truth. His argument might have been easier to follow if he had made it clear that he was not dealing with truth or error in the abstract. To the ancient question 'What is truth?' there can be but one answer. 'The criterion of truth may be called inconceivability of the opposite' (537), or that which can never be contradicted or shown to be self contradictory. Similarly, error, or falsehood (Bradley is not enamoured of the second term) would be that which is essentially out of harmony with reality; that which has 'an inconsistent content' (189). But in the conditions of our intellectual life, as Bradley constantly reminds us, to attain to truth so defined is impossible. If then we identify truth with reality, we are equating it with the religious conception of God, as we find it in the Fourth Gospel. But since we are on the road and have not yet attained to clear sight, we have to be content with the provisional.

And this is what Bradley really means. Suppose we say, using Bradley's symbols, that $X=b$, we shall be correct if by X we really mean $X(ab)$. But if we go on to say $X(ab)=d$, 'this is false, because d is not present in the subject, and so we have a collision. But the collision is resolved if we take the subject, not as mere $X(ab)$, but more widely as $X(abcd)$ Thus the error consisted in the reference of d to ab ' (193). It was characteristic of Bradley that he did not develop this simple yet constantly neglected distinction, and show that it underlies all the processes of observation and experiment by which science has made its marvellous advances. It may even be said to supply the justification for Mill's five inductive methods. In fact, we could never hope to approach to truth unless we were persuaded that we could never finally reach it. Every conclusion

we formulate is but provisional. We must be prepared to revise, to modify, even to reject. We must observe the precept of Bias as carefully in the laboratory as in the market place, and treat every theory we embrace as one possibly, after further investigation, to be rejected; every theory we reject as one possibly to be received and upheld. Our modern reliance on research is another way of expressing our faith in this principle. The historian, like the biographer, must be ready to criticize alike the conclusions of his predecessors and his own. The artist will be constantly searching for new methods of perfecting his technique, and some fresh inspiration in a world which he can never hope to grasp in its entirety. Even the moralist must revise his imperatives before they become mere rules of thumb and (to take a favourite example of Bradley) must do his best to overcome the moral conflict with evil and pass outside morality altogether. For the same reason, it may be held, as it was by R. G. Collingwood, though Bradley would naturally deny it, that no metaphysics is possible; only a history of metaphysics. The very truths of religion, unless a stream of criticism is allowed to play on them unceasingly, grow uncouth.

No genuine servant of knowledge has ever failed to live up to these high demands. The so-called medieval age of faith was an age of unwearied inquiry into accepted assertions. If it was perilous to question the dogmas of the Church, a hundred doubts might be suggested as to their meanings. Scientific and philosophic investigators alike recognize the truth of Bradley's contention, that truth is no more than the ever-elusive goal of patient research. But if this be so, what place is left for the devotion of the saint? Who would die for a provisional view of the truth? 'Here stand I; God help me; I can do no other.' Luther would hardly have been ready to face a tempest of Duke Georges if he had supposed that his view of the Epistle to the Romans were liable to be

revised tomorrow. The question might be put in another way. Granted that I am to be prepared to throw over my conviction, am I not to be allowed to defend it? However provisional the attitude we cultivate, surely there comes a time when, even with the threat of the faggot before us, we must be ready with an unflinching '*eppur se muove*'.

THE CONFIDENCE OF SCIENCE

The difficulty, such as it is, arises, as such difficulties often do, from a too hasty generalization, though it must be admitted that Bradley does not trouble to protect us against it. The student, either of nature or of the records of the past, of the secret movements of the mind, or of the sacred records of his faith, knows quite well the difference between feeling his way to a temporary halting place, reaching a point from which he is prepared to make a confident advance, and cherishing a conviction, any deep misgiving as to which would plunge his whole world into confusion and would wreck all the work he had ever done or could hope to do. The martyr who goes to the stake may never have given a thought to the demands of intellectual honesty or to the existence of provisional truths; but when he refuses to deny his master or what he understands as his master's bidding, he is not guilty of indolent or self-willed obscurantism.

Bradley is not defending a one-sided and imperfect view of truth; he is asserting the presence of something without which neither truth nor satisfaction would be possible. Not otherwise, we imagine, would Bradley have been prepared to defend his faith in the Absolute. 'Take this away from me,' he would say, 'and nothing is left remarkable beneath the visiting moon.' We have already noticed the confidence—many would call it by a harsher name—with which he asserts the impregnable truth of the existence of the Absolute. The same contradiction, apparent, but only apparent, can be seen in

a group of Bradley's contemporaries, with whom, however strong his opposition, he had more in common than he or they supposed. The great leaders of science in the 70's, Huxley, Roscoe and Tyndall, and the Cambridge men who so warmly sympathized with them, were convinced that to continue to hold any proposition on insufficient evidence was fatal; yet they believed with all a martyr's fervour that truth can be attained, and that devotion to its service is perfect freedom—an assertion which, in those days, called for some courage in certain circles. They did not anticipate the modification of Dalton's atomic theory or Darwin's presentation of the doctrine of evolution which evidence, familiar today, has effected. But they would have accepted its consequences at once; they knew that the habit of mind without which no approximation to truth is possible is that of 'not as though I had already attained or were already perfect'. But the goal was there to be reached.

TRUTH AS OPPOSED TO TRUE PROPOSITIONS

There are in fact some convictions which do not move in the world of the provisional at all. Where is the lover content to say, 'So far as I know, my mistress has me in her heart'? Still less will the saint be heard confessing, 'I believe at present that God is holy and good, and I shall go on believing this till I find grounds for doubt.' The child to whom his mother stands for everything that is good has never argued it out. Yet none of these beliefs are baseless or suspended in air. On the contrary, they are founded on an inner certainty which the believer is as little able to doubt as he can doubt himself; a certainty which, if it were shaken—and who that has watched Othello can say that this is impossible?—would destroy his world and himself. But it is just such a certainty as this, the assertion of a part, perhaps the best part, of oneself, that is a necessity for all the pursuit of

knowledge. It may be the nobility of a trusted friend, or the resolve never to do, or to stand, a certain thing, or the confidence that honest intellectual endeavour will always in the long run be rewarded. The sceptic, who holds that there is no such thing as truth, or even truth as attainable by us, is an intellectual monster. He is a more patent contradiction than the Cretan Epimenides. No man seriously discusses whether truth is attainable; but only what propositions can be regarded as true. Bradley may speak of truth (the statements that we with our limited powers call such) as no more than error, possibly bearing in mind the assertions that science, not always loyal to its innermost convictions, was shouting to his contemporaries. But he would never have conceded that truth and error so understood were appearances, or that there could be any doubt as to the validity of the axiom, 'if a thing may be, and is essential, it must be'. This at all events stood for him outside the world of appearance. As for all sensible men, so for him there were certain things which were on the farther side of doubt, even though on this side of the Absolute. How far this practical certainty was founded on faith, as the Christian would understand it, must be considered later. But the foregoing will be enough to answer the criticism that to Bradley truth and error were on the same level.

EVIL AS 'OVER-RULED'

Let us now turn to the more pressing problem of evil and good, and their claim, denied by Bradley, to reality. Of the cruder form in which the problem generally presents itself to religious faith, the incompatibility of the existence of evil with the goodness of an omnipotent and irresistible power, Bradley does not take much notice. It is his object rather to decide in what way evil and good, which are certainly facts in our experience, are related logically or metaphysically to the Absolute. They are

both appearances. Bradley's treatment of evil, referred to in the last chapter, is disappointingly brief; but it is noteworthy that, in spite of Kant's conception of the radical evil, the whole subject of evil in works on religious philosophy is generally raised only toward the end, as if evil had its unclean lair in the outskirts of our world, instead of dwelling, as most of us would confess that it dwells, in the centre. We might be tempted to surmise, especially if we listened to the Freudians, that the majority of philosophers, unlike the theologians of the West, have been temperamentally disinclined to let their thoughts rest on the matter; no wonder that, with interests moving in a serener atmosphere than those of the common man, they have failed to convince him that they had anything of value to say to him on the subject.

Bradley lived a life which had something of the detachment of Hegel's; but for years he was a physical sufferer; he was certainly not unacquainted with pain. Accordingly the larger part of the brief chapter on evil in *Appearance and Reality* discusses evil as pain. At the centre of pain, as indeed of other forms of evil, is inconsistency, frustration. This is equally true of the evil of waste in nature, and of moral evil, which is the obstacle to our achieving moral good. Hence, as one-sided, it cannot be real. Yet since both it and pleasure are experiences, we are justified, he proceeds, in asking whether they do not exist for the Absolute. Cautious as we must be in making affirmations about the Absolute, there must be in it a balance of pleasure over pain, or existence for the Absolute could not be, what it must be, harmonious. But in addition to this, as Bradley reminds us, it is 'over-ruled', or 'it is enlisted and it plays a part in a higher good end, and in this sense, unknowingly is good. "Heaven's design"', he allowed himself to continue, 'can realize itself as effectively in "Catiline or Borgia" as in the scrupulous or innocent' (202). But here we have to

do with an end that is super-moral; and the same thing must be said about collision within the self; can this discord be resolved? The answer is that the Absolute 'is the richer for every discord, and for all diversity which it embraces' (204). The distinction between pain and pleasure, evil and good, cannot be rolled out to make the Absolute 'a flat monotony of emptiness'. The opposites are there; but in a new context; they are seen against a new background; and evil, as we understand the term, even as applied to a Catiline or a Borgia, ceases to be relevant. Here again, harmony actually is because it must be.

How far does this take us? Does it carry us beyond Pope's 'All partial evil, universal good'? It owes nothing to the view of Augustine which, in some form or other, has often been held by those who were far from acknowledging their debt to him; namely, that evil, as having no positive existence, is not the correlative of good, but its absence. Few contrasts in the history of theological thought are so striking as that the very theologian who held sin to be the mark of the total depravity of mankind should have regarded evil as merely the deprivation of good. In fact, what we call evil, Augustine argues, is itself good, but good misdirected or vanishing; a principle which finds its noblest and its most startling expression in Dante;¹ hate and lust are both of them only love, the true good, wrongly manifested.

Here Dante is dependent partly on Augustine, partly on Aquinas. It is vain, says Augustine, to look for the causes of this defect of being, which is evil;² as well seek to see darkness or hear silence. And he adds in the *Confessions* (vii, 12) that what is corrupted, or manifests evil, cannot be the complete good, which must be beyond the reach of corruption; but it must be good in some sense,

¹ *Paradiso*, xvii; cf. *Convito*, iv, 22.

² *De Civitate Dei*, xii, 7, cf. xv, 22.

since it is only the good that can be corrupted. Is this penetrating insight or a *tour de force*? It seems at any rate to bring us back to Catiline and Borgia, though by a different path. Against Augustine's virtual 'evil is good, but not good enough', we can set Bradley's 'evil when seen clearly enough lives on transformed, in reality'. This is not the place to discuss at length Augustine's interpretation; evil is not only wrongly directed love; it is a defect of being; all things are *bona in quantum sunt*. A brief but useful account is given by Burnaby.³ Aquinas' doctrine, it may be noted, is based on the principle that every thing makes for its true being, which ultimately is God; the love of God, therefore, however malformed, is universal. Bradley shows no interest in patristic or scholastic speculations. But in spite of the brevity or even the casual nature of Bradley's references to evil, they demand a fuller consideration here, if the inevitable uneasiness they arouse is to be removed.

EVIL AS PAIN

Evil, Bradley says, is commonly taken to mean pain, or waste, or immorality (198). It is under these three heads that it must be harmonized with the Absolute. It is with the Absolute that evil is concerned, but not with God. This is but natural, since God is only another appearance. But can we be said to give proper weight to evil if we regard it, like good, merely as an appearance, to be carried on into reality? Is this not wholly at variance with our instinctive feeling that evil, however we choose to define it, is something which ought not to be, and which is doomed in the end to destruction?

Let us begin with evil as pain, but pain in the comprehensive sense of all the physical sufferings that have afflicted the generations of sentient beings since life began, with all their attendant horrors, fear and anxiety

³ *Amor Dei* (1938), pp. 36 ff.

and death. No apologetic dealing with pain, so understood, has been really successful. Most arguments intended to justify its place in the universe have read like attempts to save the face of Providence or of God. We are generally informed that there is not so much pain in the world as is often alleged; or at any rate there is a balance of pleasure or of happiness; evil is transmuted or at any rate exists for some good end. The case has never been more eloquently stated than in Martineau's *Study of Religion*, sixty years ago. But this can never be satisfactory. There may be less evil than good in the world, as good and evil are commonly understood; we have no means of deciding the matter. But that there should be any evil at all is the problem. Evil may produce good; the scandal is that good should have to be produced by such means.

The difficulty really arises from our habit of regarding evil or pain as something existing in itself—sometimes expressed in the crude question, Why did God create evil? Edward Caird once pointed out⁴ that if evil is absolute, something existing in its own right, as in the Manichæan view, and out of all relation to good, it ceases to be evil. And indeed, however we may define evil, we are actually thinking of what is not good, that is, of what is in some relation, though a negative one, to good. Moreover, there can be no such thing as a mass of suffering, or of evil, even if we set it down as an appearance. When we think of evil, at all events in its non-moral significance, we think of some experience which, rightly or wrongly, temporarily or permanently, we dislike, for ourselves and, it may be, for others. It cannot be identified with a 'thing', because there is nothing of which we can say that it is universally and permanently disliked, just as there is nothing which is universally and permanently liked. The very nature of likes and dislikes is to pass into one another; even the extremes of physical agony

⁴ *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1903-4).

may be welcomed with enthusiasm or looked back upon with gratitude; and when we shrink from them ourselves, we may rejoice that they are inflicted on others, for their benefit or our own satisfaction. Viewed in this light, 'nothing is good but by respect'—or evil. The world in which we live teems with experiences that we dislike, which we try to get rid of or to guard against, for ourselves or our friends or the members of our society. What proportion these experiences bear to others of a different nature it is impossible to guess. The camel is constantly changing to a weasel; the sweet becomes the nauseating.

On the other hand, in its higher reaches, life seems to pass beyond the consciousness of suffering altogether. Even a savage and ferocious war introduces many men and women to the delights of living dangerously. 'See all, nor be afraid.' See your sufferings, and the sufferings of others, however terrible, against the background of the long-term achievement, and you will find yourself agreeing with Bradley that suffering is only an appearance. But does this make for flabbiness or indecision or an Oriental passivity and fatalism? Surely not. There might indeed be some danger of this if each individual had his own set of likes and dislikes, and could find no allies in the attempt to get rid of the first or to turn it into the second. But, however we may suffer among ourselves, we know perfectly well that there are certain things which normally give rise to acute feelings of dislike and antagonism in the whole group with which we identify ourselves; and the soundness of any society is tested by its readiness to try to get rid of them. The contrast is not between pain and pleasure, or evil and good; a contrast which rests either on an unsound psychology or a hasty metaphysics; it is between the willingness or unwillingness to take measures to purify the world and, in the familiar phrase, to raise the standard of life.

The history of mankind has been one long record of such struggles. Whatever progress we have made has been by adapting our environment to our needs as we understand them, rather than ourselves to our environment. True, it has been no instruction in the nature of the Absolute which has summoned men to this crusade; nor have their energies been always dissipated by dreams of Kismet; but it is just when we refuse to think of evil as something ultimate or self-existent, when we think of it as an appearance, in fact, and not a reality, that we approach our finer hours. The sturdiest Calvinist, facing what logical consistency would bid him regard as fated and essential evil, knows in his heart that what is really fated, what is to him the will of God, is that the monster should be driven into the abyss.

EVIL AS FRUSTRATION

Over Bradley's second form of evil we need not delay long. What we call waste or frustration, as Bradley points out, is really our sense that the ends set before us are constantly being missed (200), that of fifty seeds nature often brings but one to bear. But these ends 'are ends selected by ourselves, and selected more or less erroneously' (ibid.). We find, once more, that we are confronted by what we dislike; or we feel that our moral demands on the universe are not met. Thus, the second division of evil tends to fall back either into the first or the third. Bradley's apology, if it can so be called, is even briefer than in the previous discussion. Ends are themselves appearances; united in one great whole, they disappear. There can be, *ex vi termini*, no frustration in the Absolute. This, however, is small comfort for us. Are we prepared to admit that all our notions of good are mistaken, that our trust that love was 'creation's highest law' was a mere discord? Faith and moral endeavour could hardly exist where this

is allowed. If we are as ignorant of the Absolute as Bradley implies, such faith must disappear. The crucial question is whether we are doomed to such ignorance. This we must deal with when we come closer to the nature of the Absolute.⁵ Meanwhile, since we cannot but agree that as what we call error will constantly lead to a clearer understanding of our world, so the disappointment of our aim or hope or expectation, whatever we may think about the Absolute, leads to a higher or a more reliable achievement. Evil as frustration really lies in our own inability to do more than acquiesce in our disappointment. When we cease to acquiesce, frustration is at an end. When we refuse to believe that idea and existence must for ever exhibit that disagreement which is the mark of appearance, they 'may be united in one great whole, in which evil, and even ends, as such, disappear' (201).

MORAL EVIL

Moral evil, the third division, is to Bradley a matter of the bad will, and the contest between the bad will and the good is necessary to morality (ibid.). This point of view is already familiar to us from *Ethical Studies*. But what is the morally bad which thus stands in opposition to the good? Most would be content to answer, that which *ought not* to be. Morality is concerned with what is felt to be obligatory. Moral evil is therefore distinct from what we dislike or wish to get rid of, or what we regret and would gladly see altered. It is what we are bound to drive out of existence, by the deepest law of our nature. Even if we regard the good as no more than human happiness, we preserve its moral character when, in defiance of logic, we assert that happiness is something at which we are bound to aim. We may make this our aim,

⁵ Chapter 8, p. 182, *infra*.

or we may not. We may have no reasonable grounds for thinking that our aim will be successful. But the moral man will not hesitate. The maxim of faith is: 'Be sure that opposition to the good is overcome, and nevertheless act as if it were there' (443).

As to what is obligatory, there have been a thousand opinions. The morally good and obligatory has been as variously interpreted as the intellectually true. And when we pass into the sphere of religion, as most morally-minded persons after all have done, finding that their idea of moral values rests on their idea of God, or is derived from it—when, that is to say, we think of the morally obligatory not as the product of our nature or conditioned by it but as flowing from God's will, we find ourselves confronted by a bewildering Olympus of deities; and they demand the most contradictory acts of obedience, from human sacrifice to the preservation of noxious insects; from the *lex talionis* to forgiveness until seventy times seven. Surely, it will be argued, this is to obliterate the distinction between moral good and evil. There is no action, it would seem, which has not been classed under both heads. The distinction disappears more disturbingly than that between truth and error. Bradley does not urge this consideration. But it is entirely germane to his view of appearance as inconsistency. The field of moral good becomes a scene of vast clash and confusion, in which goodness and the endeavour to attain it are both appearances. Nor would it be any comfort to be bidden to surmise that these discords can be resolved in the diapason of the Absolute.

What must be remembered, however, is that morality does not consist in performing certain acts, but in recognizing a categorical obligation. The moral man is the man who sets himself to do the best he knows. 'If the best he knows is *not* the best, that is, speaking morally, beside the question' (431). Human experience suggests that

loyalty to our own code of morals is not endangered by the knowledge that other codes exist. Still less, that the compelling power of 'it is God's will' is likely to lead to weakness or uncertainty through belief in the existence of other gods and other wills. And we may add, with regard to obligation, what was said of truth; whatever his view of appearance, Bradley doubts the authority neither of the one nor the other. In his brother's Gifford Lectures, delivered in Glasgow in 1907, occurs the sentence: 'There can be nothing, however evil, which is not an instrument of the divine will';⁶ and the lectures conclude with the words: 'The suffering of the finite may in the divine life survive as an essential condition of the glory which enshrines it there as here.' The Gifford lecturer does not follow his brother so far as to regard God as a little lower than the Absolute. But we may look on his lectures as an exposition of religion touched by the philosophy of *Appearance and Reality*, and on that book as an exposition of a system of idealism deeply influenced by the religion in which both the brothers had been brought up. The view of evil which is pointed to by both is a paradox; but it is the paradox according to which, harsh as it may sound in most ears, evil is meant to be here; but it is not meant to remain here; eternal wisdom set it here that it might be overcome either by man's inspired efforts, or by God's redeeming grace; the paradox which most of man's finer religious thought implies, and without which Christianity would be unintelligible. We may recall the words in which Milton makes Adam exclaim to the Archangel:

*O goodness infinite, goodness immense,
That all this good of evil shall produce
And evil turn to good.*⁷

⁶ A. C. Bradley, *Ideals of Religion* (1940), p. 265.

⁷ *Paradise Lost*, xii, lines 469 ff.

BRADLEY NOT AN INDIFFERENTIST

There are however other discrepancies involved in our ideas of goodness, on which Bradley spends some time (423 ff.). Goodness may be identified with self-sacrifice; but it may also be felt to be self-assertion or self-realization; or perhaps, ignoring the fact that each of these implies self-contradiction (for is not the self an appearance?) we may attempt to combine them. But this leads us into the sphere of religion once more; and instead of showing how this contradiction might be resolved in the Absolute, Bradley goes on to the proof of his now familiar contention that religion, like God himself, is but appearance. Yet appearance, he will again remind us, does not mean illusion. A summons is not the less real or urgent because the voice that utters it sounds from the world of appearance. In fact, it is when we see most clearly the difficulty of applying the rule-of-thumb maxims of popular morality that we understand the world in which we have to live and act. If intellectual and moral endeavours cannot maintain themselves against the contradictions of experience and the transformation of views more or less hastily formed, so much the worse for the individual from whom such endeavours are demanded. That would be to suppose that whole-heartedness can only be expected from children.

It is undeniable that one may contemplate all forms of creed and hold to none. No one will long continue fighting for an illusion; he may fight to the death for what to others will be only an appearance or an illusion. Bradley does not greatly concern himself whether his readers sheathe their swords or draw them. He never conceived it as his mission to build Jerusalem in this or any land, much as he lamented the barrenness of England's intellectual and religious soil. 'We have but little notion in England of freedom either in art or in science.

Irrelevant appeals to practical results are allowed to make themselves heard. . . . We fail through timidity and through a want of singleness and sincerity' (450). What he was anxious about was the agreement of idea and existence, and the overcoming of their discord. The appearances of error and evil, like their correlates, not only drive us on to their reconciliation, or coexistence, in the Absolute; they leave us with the conviction, as Bradley sets them forth, that there are certain conclusions for thought and action which no sane thinker can doubt. Those who would lead us beyond good and evil may entice us into the desert where there is no city to dwell in.

But it will at all events be clear that for Bradley the distinction is there. True, his language is sometimes provocative and sometimes hasty. He does not trouble to keep before his readers the contrast between what we call good and evil objects and experiences, and that which is the source of permanent satisfaction and dissatisfaction. But it is only when we realize the relativity of the things we are accustomed to call good and evil, that we are on the way to arrive at an adequate notion of goodness, that which is good in its own right, and can never change to its opposite. We reach that goodness, says Bradley, in the pleasure of contemplating the whole, just as the whole, for which limitations and contradictions do not exist, is completely satisfying and self-satisfied. And when we reach this conception of the good as the whole, a universe intelligible and intelligent at once, we are not far from Plato's idea or form of the good, which holds the system together, enabling us to understand the several parts, as the sun enables us to see the objects in what we call the visible world. It is, as Mr. H. B. W. Joseph says, 'the coping stone of the universe'.

It is worthy of note, finally, that Bradley's insistence on the relativity of good and evil corresponds rather closely and indeed surprisingly to the Christian conception of

what this life offers of evil; 'the light affliction which is but for a moment', and the desire of the heart along with which is sent 'leanness into the soul'; while the contrast to which Bradley points between the mutability of good and evil here and the permanent satisfaction afforded by the whole or the Absolute, recalls the blessedness of the unseen world, beyond the reach of the corruption of moth and rust, and the depredations of thieves.

CHAPTER EIGHT

IN DEFENCE OF THE ABSOLUTE

DID THE ABSOLUTE SATISFY BRADLEY?

WE may acquit Bradley's idealism of the charge of indifferentism, intellectual or moral; but did it give Bradley all the satisfaction at which he hints, and could it have of itself sustained and fired him through all the technical discussions that fill the pages of the *Principles of Logic* and *Appearance and Reality*, and the difficult essays by which these volumes were amplified? We have still, as it were, to find our way, if we can, to the heart of the Absolute as he conceives it. And we can make no better start in doing this than by quoting the summary of results by which he prefaces his last chapter. 'We have found that Reality is one, that it essentially is experience, and that it owns a balance of pleasure. There is nothing in the Whole beside appearance, and every fragment of appearance qualifies the Whole; while on the other hand, so taken together, appearances, as such, cease. Nothing in the universe can be lost, nothing fails to contribute to the single Reality, but every finite diversity is also supplemented and transformed. Everything in the Absolute still is that which it is for itself. Its private character remains, and is but neutralized by complement and addition. And hence, because nothing in the end can be *merely* itself, in the end no appearance, as such, can be real. But appearances fail of reality in varying degrees; and to assert that one on the whole is worth no more than another, is fundamentally vicious' (511). Later on he added: 'We persist in this conclusion, and we urge that, as far as it goes, it amounts to absolute knowledge. But this conclusion on the other side, I have pointed out, does not go very far. It leaves us free to admit that what we

know¹ after all, nothing in proportion to the world of our ignorance. . . . We have thus left due space for the exercise of doubt and wonder. . . . We justify the natural wonder which delights to stray beyond our daylight world, and to follow paths that lead into half-known half-unknowable regions. Our conclusion, in brief, has explained and has confirmed the irresistible impression that all is beyond us' (548f.).

Here, we cannot doubt, is Bradley's real ground for satisfaction. No philosophy can provide the final way of looking at truth or God in the universe. Philosophy grants the satisfaction of what may be called the mystical side of our nature, a nature of which the intellect is certainly not the highest aspect (6f.). 'Happiness', says Thomas Mann, 'consists in harmony, clarity, unity with oneself, the consciousness of a positive, confident, decisive turn of mind; peace resident in the soul.'¹

But this harmony, if it is to bring an abiding happiness and peace, must embrace all the aspects of our nature, all sides of our experience. Our whole being can only be satisfied by reality (159). The argument which has met us again and again, and which Bradley treats as cardinal, satisfyingly consistent, is that what must be, if there is nothing against it, really is (239, 242). Such satisfaction, Bradley claims, his system confers. The whole of truth is unattainable for us. 'Knowledge in a sense is vanity, which feels in its heart that science is a poor thing if measured by the wealth of the real universe'; but the knowledge which we have and cannot doubt 'seems sufficient to secure the chief interests of our nature' (548f.).

We might quote many other sentences which, like the above, imply and even take for granted the desire to find through philosophy a method of being at home in the universe, of reducing the jungle and the disorder of the backwoods to a dwelling where everything has its place

¹ *Essays of Three Decades* (1947).

and can be made to co-operate in the orderly work of the household. This, Bradley holds, would be impossible without sheer intellectual consistency; if the rules of mathematics or geometry or the maxims of logic proved to be irreconcilable or contradictory, there could be no satisfaction for thought; nor could there be if contradictions revealed themselves in the ethical life, and the only ends that human beings could aim at were beyond our grasp. We want to be sure that the universe is not 'making a sport of us' (550). But these are not the only possibilities of frustration. Our world as a matter of fact affords nothing either stable or clear. At one moment nature terrifies us, and in the next overwhelms us with awe and admiration. Our knowledge is no better than ignorance, and our ignorance becomes the basis of our knowledge. The more we study cause, the less we understand its relation to effect. What we call things lose their identity as we watch them, yet we cannot treat them as if they did not exist. Our sense of the continuity of our own selves fades away to a succession of states or a society of concrete groups; yet we cannot but talk and think of our selves as if they possessed some permanence. The mental rest which we seek must hold good for the whole of life. Without it, life is not worth living.

THE ABSOLUTE AS THE GOAL OF PHILOSOPHY

It would be a mistake to suppose that in all this there is anything unique in Bradley's presentation. He knows well enough, as we all do, that the pursuit of ultimate truth is not the occupation of all men; nor are the contradictions inherent in human experience a common cause of distress. But, were it not for the restlessness born of this malaise, and the desire to escape into some calmer region, there would have been no philosophy. Plato himself might affirm that philosophy is the child of wonder or curiosity; and such curiosity might have been the impulse

of the early philosophers of Ionia. But curiosity itself is moved by a deeper impulse; if the play on words might be allowed, the desire to understand is the desire to know that which stands under our changing world and our perplexing existence. Plato, indeed, makes this clear enough. Our life is a troubled sea; we must construct the best raft we can, in order, like the much-travelled Ulysses, to sail home on it. We must make friends with heaven, and reach the secret of our being where, beyond these voices, there is peace. Nor can we be insensible of the enthusiasm which moved alike the Stoics, the Epicureans, and the Neo-Platonists. All of them sought, like Boethius, the consolations which philosophy could give. Nor must the subtleties of the medieval philosophical theologians blind us to their fundamental desire to justify the ways of God to man, by the reconciliation of faith and reason; and when reason once more ceased to feel the necessity of making terms with faith, it sought none the less eagerly for some kind of conception of what it called God to unify the whole of life.

It is significant that Spinoza should express his ideal as the intellectual love of God, a phrase in which the adjective gains its importance from the noun, and not *vice versa*. As little can we mistake the genuine warmth that lies beneath the cold and balanced words that Kant uses to elucidate the autonomous will and its vindication by God. Even J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer and the champions of science in the 70's, with their enthusiasm for truth and their belief that it could be grasped, speak at times in a kind of prophetic strain, when they describe a view of the universe purified from the mistakes and superstitions of popular religion. There has hardly been a serious thinker in the last hundred years (and in saying this we need not forget either Feuerbach or Marx) of whom it could not have been said that his aim was not intellectual consistency but a way of life.

BRADLEY'S DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ABSOLUTE AND GOD

What marks Bradley off from the rest is his sharp distinction between the basis of all existence, the Absolute, and God. He refuses to say with Spinoza that we are at liberty, if we like, to call substance or reality by the name of God. As little will he agree with Herbert Spencer that the unknowable is all the God there is. He will neither surrender the thought of God nor identify it with reality. On the contrary, since God, as Bradley insists he must be understood, cannot answer the test of reality, he must be relegated to the sphere of appearance. This, as we have seen in Chapter Six, and as we must never forget in dealing with Bradley, does not mean that God is non-existent, or an illusion. It does mean that when we talk of God, we must not lift him above the limits which bound the creatures in our universe. We must keep him within those limits and make the best of it.

Now, such a situation, on the face of it, seems, as Bradley admits, 'shocking' (450). 'The religious consciousness', as C. C. J. Webb says, 'cannot forbear the demand that the supreme God should be the supreme Reality, the Absolute and nothing less.'² A God who is only appearance, even if he shares this limitation with both time and goodness, is to many no God at all. Far better, religion would cry, to get rid of God altogether than thus reduce him to a shadowy existence which cannot be taken seriously. Indeed, Bradley is more serious, and more religious, in his treatment of God, than most of the thinkers who have assigned no importance to the distinction which he regards as vital. It is the resolve to make the distinction, he reiterates, which gives to the conception of God its value for religion; to correlate it with a metaphysical interpretation of the universe, or of being as such, with which religion has not necessarily anything to

² *God and Personality* (1919), p. 219.

do, empties the significance of God as a factor in the religious life. If God is not that, then what is left of him? But if, on the other hand, God is to be identified with the Absolute, then, it may be argued, he will be withdrawn outside our own life of hopes and fears, endeavours, struggles and attainments, as far as the *primum mobile* is withdrawn from our tiny earth.

Such is the treatment that most philosophers have afforded to what they call God. But that is not how we know God. For religion the Absolute is not God. 'If you identify the Absolute with God, that is not the God of religion' (447). God cannot be perfect, like the Absolute, for he must have personal relations. Hence, he is limited; he is within the universe, not its sum or its reality. Unless he thinks and feels, though standing above and apart from man, he is 'inconsistent emptiness' (445). Nor will Bradley for a moment admit that to assert this is to throw doubt on what God really means to man. Instead, he takes this conception of God as something that needs no proof. He is aware of the intellectual contradictions that attend any theological account of God's being and activity. 'Religion prefers to put forth statements which it feels are untenable, and to correct them at once by counter-statements which it finds are no better' (446). But this only keeps God the closer to us. If there were no inconsistencies in his being, we, plunged in inconsistencies as we are, should be able to make nothing of him.

To most thoughtful religious people these inconsistencies are not unfamiliar. We do what we can with them, hoping that at some time, here or hereafter, the reconciliation will be found. Meanwhile, in spite of this, God remains a factor in the religious life; far too potent a factor to be given up because of it. Bradley, with his early religious training, was no more ready to make the surrender than we are. The step he took was to affirm that

these inconsistencies cannot be got rid of; and ~~that~~ since they are there, the coherence of the universe or of reality as a whole must be saved by distinguishing reality from God.

ITS APPARENT NECESSITY

'Then', the religious man would reply, 'so much the worse for reality. If I must choose between what I feel God must be in relation to myself, and some all-embracing totality of existence, I choose the first.' But the problem is not solved so easily. However precious we feel our limited and personal God to be to us, the obstinate questionings, the unsolved contradictions will return. Bradley is right. We cannot be satisfied, ultimately, with a God who is not, and yet who is, one with ourselves and with our world; who hates evil and yet allows it to defy him in the midst of his own creation; and who, however exalted, is, like ourselves, only a part of the all. The primitive resolve to cling to the personal consolations of religion brings its own punishment. To assume the necessity of a 'personal' God, because, for example, he 'finds' me, may not be, in Bradley's phrase, 'to trifle indecently with a subject which deserves some respect' (453), but it may leave us wondering whether we may not have lost both personality and God.

What then is to be done? Are we to watch religion and philosophy drifting farther apart? Are we to endeavour to silence our doubts about religion? Or are we to dismiss the Absolute to the region of our minds which we allot to pure theory and do our best to keep it there? Before we decide on this, however, there are two points on which we should reassure ourselves. The first has to do with the real meaning of the term Absolute, as Bradley uses or understands it; the second has to do with what is involved in our thought of God. As to the first, though the greater part of *Appearance and Reality* may be said to be an exposition

of the matter, there is much that is left unexamined, and the rest of this chapter may usefully be devoted to it.

BRADLEY'S FULLER EXPOSITION OF THE ABSOLUTE

We start, then, by recalling that the Absolute contains within it all that is; outside it there is no reality. And the Absolute begins and ends with experience. 'The fact that falls elsewhere seems, in my mind, to be a mere word and a failure, or else an attempt at self-contradiction' (145). This experience, however, is not mine, or yours; for neither of these can be said, as such, to exist; but the experience of finite centres, harmonized into one. All pains which the spirit of man must endure, all weakness which impairs it, all the wild joys of living, and the wormwood and the gall, are gathered, as it were, into one mighty chord. 'We can find no province of the world so low but the Absolute inhabits it.' Even 'relations of isolation and hostility are in this unity affirmed and absorbed' (487f.). In fact, 'in the Absolute, no appearance can be lost. . . . Deprived of any one aspect or element the Absolute may be called worthless' (456). 'How these various modes can come together into a single unity must remain unintelligible' (457). Yet it is certain that they do.

Nor must we think of this unity as being concerned merely with our own thought and will and conduct and self-consciousness. For most of us, our experience of the world is larger and more important than our experience of ourselves. If the Absolute is the sum of all experience, it will include the experience of nature in its entirety; of the nature, that is to say, not only of the poet or the artist, but of all finite centres; and of nature, too, not as composed of primary qualities only, but of secondary qualities as well. 'Secondary qualities are an actual part of the physical world. . . . The very beauty of Nature . . . is, for us, fact as good as the hardest of primary qualities' (279).

Thus the Absolute is also in a sense evil and ugly and false; but it is more than any one of its fragmentary details (488). Nature's 'beauty and its terror and its majesty are no illusion, but qualify it essentially' (494); and then, as we pass farther and farther away from lifeless nature, we find ourselves brought into touch with spirit, that 'unity of the manifold in which the externality of the manifold has utterly ceased' (498).

Bradley protests, not without reason, against the haste that would divide the world, or things, into appearance and reality. Everything of which we have experience is appearance as we know it, that is, as distinct from something else, as looked at by itself; even the admiration and fear with which we regard nature, and the eagerness with which we pursue or repudiate our own aims. Yet, like all appearance, it must be gathered up into the Absolute. And we must go farther; we must beware of the subtle perils that lurk in the use of the word 'our'. Almost inevitably, 'our' is a generalization of 'my', the experience of thoughtful persons like ourselves. But we are not the only possessors of experience. If Aquinas would ask us what right we have to forget the superior intellect of the angels, the anthropologist would challenge our neglect of the clumsy yet significant gropings of the infant or the savage, those 'sacraments of simple life' (the phrase was coined by R. R. Marett) which have so sure a place in the sum of all experience, as well as in our more critical and instructed vision.

Again, intellectually we are all Ptolemaics rather than Copernicans. The world in which we ourselves live is the centre of our universe. It is *our* universe. Nature to us is nature as we know it. But our knowledge of nature is continually expanding. The recent advances of science have been so spectacular that we are nervous alike of its criticism of our philosophies and the outcome of its future discoveries. Bradley knew nothing of these modern

fears. To him the sciences were bodies of knowledge reached by devoted specialists which needed to be arranged on what seems a true principle of worth (497). Evolution is hinted at as an example of the 'potential' which, if unexplained, is a mere compromise between 'is' and 'is not' (582), and which simply drives us back to the unreality* of appearances; 'the imperceptibles of physics' are dismissed in a sentence (277). 'It is evidently useless to raise such questions about the object of natural science, when you have not settled in your mind what that object is, and when you supply no principle on which we can decide in what its reality consists' (492). Whether he would have expressed himself thus with the grim spectres of entropy and the atomic bomb before him, we can only guess; but if the experience of the Absolute is all possible experience, it grows every year more difficult to imagine even a whisper of its power.

BRADLEY'S ORIGINALITY

In all this, with a detachment which he never tried to shake off, Bradley pursued his own line. Though he acknowledges his debt to Hegel, he refuses to call himself either an idealist or a realist. For one brought up in the schools at a time when Plato and Aristotle were revered as the masters of those that know, his independence of them is surprising. Neither appearance nor reality with him are what they were to Plato—the changing and unreliable deliverances of our sense, and the pure being on the other side of existence with which our guesses have nothing to do. Nor does he regard the Absolute as form over against matter, or as occupied with pure thought and self-contemplation. It would be both true and false to say that he starts before the point where Descartes and Spinoza and Leibnitz begin; and also that he begins where they end. All abstractions for him lead to the ruin of thought. He does not seek for a *pou sto*, either in a first

cause or in the final end of activity, in the gulf between mind and matter, or the progress of thought from thesis through antithesis to synthesis. He cares as little for the world as will and understanding as for ideas as copies of the sensible world outside us. We reach reality when we reach the coherence and integration of our experience.

COHERENCE AND COMPREHENSIVENESS

Coherence, as he tells us a hundred times, Bradley regards as a fundamental need of our intellectual nature. We cannot rest in an ultimate or even a proximate contradiction. And therefore contradiction cannot be real. But what right have we to say this? Has such a proof any more claim to cogence than the ontological? In dealing with the latter, Bradley does not refer to either Gaunilo or Kant. But, he argues, the 'perfection that is real', on which that proof is based, 'might simply be theoretical' (150); or, in other words, there is no intrinsic connexion between perfection and existence; at best, perfection implies a 'higher' degree of reality (400). Against this, he lays it down that 'that alone is really valid for the intellect, which in a calm moment the mere intellect is incapable of doubting' (151). But will coherence manage to stand when perfection must fall? Neither idea can be said to be a necessity to all rational thought. The ontologists only claim that when we think hard enough we cannot separate perfection from existence. Bradley makes the same claim for coherence. In spite of his attack on the traditional laws of thought in the *Principles*, he affirms that if he is confronted by 'A is B' and 'A is not B but C' in his actual experience, not only are both false, but in reality A must be B and C, or something higher than both. 'Standing contradictions appear where the subject is narrowed artificially, and where diversity in the identity is taken as excluded' (567). But when we separate the real thing from 'our mutilated and abstract view' of

it the contradiction disappears (ibid.). 'The world discordant, half-completed, and accidental for each one, is in the Whole a compensated system of conspiring particulars' (472). And on this basis Bradley bids us conclude that all our perplexities and disappointments, all our jarring aims and heartless struggles, all the burden of this unintelligible world will find their ultimate reconciliation. But it is surely too much to say that the intellect is incapable of doubting this. In every age, the lack of such reconciliation has tortured thinking men. We have been forced to be the followers of Heraclitus. Generation after generation has called upon its philosophers to show how such reconciliation is possible. And the philosophers have done their best; a poor best, it would seem, when we view the world today. Bradley had not lived through the confusions that have followed two world wars. As it is, he does not attempt to satisfy us. 'I do not know how the reconciliation is brought about. I only know that it must be.'

Few thinkers have been as frank, either in admitting their impotence or denying its relevance. But the conditions of reality were two-fold. Reality must be coherent; and it must be comprehensive. This latter, however, is on the face of it an argument *ex vi termini* or else an analytic proposition. Reality must include all that is, just as all that is (really is!) must be real. Since even appearances have in a sense their existence, and their place in reality, there is nothing that can be left out. The only conceivable harmony is a harmony of everything.

The proposition is analytic if we understand reality as Bradley interprets it. Undoubtedly, the all is the all. And if I desire to take refuge in the all, I can thrust nothing outside. But the all is something of which we dare make no assertion. We know far too little of it. As regards its quality, it may be replied, but not its quantity. What we know we must take as the basis of what we do not know,

or how is any intellectual activity possible? But this throws us back again on the difficulty of coherence; we are hardly sure enough of coherence in the world of which we have any knowledge, to make it a basis of a confident assertion about the unknown whole. And if we admit that all appearances have their place in reality, however radically transformed, and that reality would be ruined by the loss of any one of them, the rescue of comprehensiveness threatens to demand the jettison of coherence.

FROM 'MAY' TO 'MUST'

Similar doubts arise when we meet the repeated argument from 'may be' to 'must be'. This is stated more than once in the needlessly provocative form that in the Absolute, 'possibility is enough' (199); 'possibility is all we require in order to prove reality' (218). We know that all is reconciled in the Absolute, though we do not know how; 'but because this result must be, and because there is nothing against it, we believe that it is' (239). There is nothing which 'declines to take its place within the system of our universe'; nothing which tends to show that the Absolute is not possible, and that is all we need; since it is necessary, it is certain (242). This is indeed a matter of logic rather than metaphysics. 'Where you have an idea and cannot doubt, there logically you must assert' (514). Either affirmation or negation; and since a single possibility (such as the existence of the Absolute) cannot contradict itself, it must be affirmed (*ibid.*). We have already observed the lurking peril of the personal pronoun, the dangerously easy transition from 'we' or 'you' to 'everyone'. Certainly when I have said that I cannot doubt it, I assert it, if I reflect on what is in my mind. Only a confused and halting thinker could find a middle point between the two. Yet this overlooks a very genuine possibility. I may be confronted by the proposition 'A is B'; I may be conscious of no rival 'A is C' or 'A is D'; and yet I may

question the evidence which is produced for 'A is B', or for the statement that no other proposition, 'A is C' or 'A is D', is possible. Moreover, what may be certain to me may be very far from certain to others. The world of unlimited possibilities, like a diabolically clever disputant, is always lying in wait for us. 'I will not concede', exclaimed the not over-cautious orator, 'that two and two are equal to four unless I know what use you mean to make of it.' 'Psychical failure and confusion may here of course stand in the way. But such confusion and failure', replies Bradley, 'can in theory count for nothing' (514). To talk of a possible which is not based on actual knowledge about reality is a 'monstrous pretence', a 'mad presumption in the guise of modesty' (ibid.).

The argument might be used to prove what Bradley would be slow to admit. Take for instance the belief in survival of death. Many would hold that such survival there must be, or what becomes of our ideas of justice, of the connexion between goodness and happiness, and the relation of God to man? And since there is nothing against it—for who can deny its possibility or hold that the so-called arguments against it are not mere guesses?—we must believe that it is true. Such a conclusion Bradley would unhesitatingly reject. He discusses the subject at length and with the wistfulness—nostalgia, in our modern jargon—which characterizes his references to religious beliefs that he no longer allows himself to share. Survival of death, he admits, is possible; but it is little more. 'It is better to be quit of both hope and fear, than to lapse back into any form of degrading superstition' (510). 'It is idle to repeat "I want something" unless you can show that the nature of things demands it also' (ibid.). And for survival, Bradley claims, this cannot be done. But can it be done with any more success for the Absolute? All the proof that Bradley gives us is that he finds it inconceivable that there should be any reality save experience,

that reality should be anything but a harmony, and that reality includes all that is. To those who cannot regard anything else as unthinkable, the maxim 'since there is no alternative to A, A is certain', is a broken sword.

'ULTIMATE DOUBTS' AND FAITH

It would, however, be unjust to press this point against Bradley. No one can expect to establish a system for interpreting the world with the confidence which we were taught to give to a set of Euclidean definitions. Bradley indeed has himself to blame. He writes occasionally as if to him and to him alone the truth had been vouchsafed. 'We hold that our conclusion is certain, and that to doubt it logically is impossible' (518). 'Show me your idea of an Other, not a part of experience, and I will show you at once that it is . . . nothing else at all' (523). The last chapter of *Appearance and Reality*, 'Ultimate Doubts', does not refer to doubts of his own which he cannot get rid of, but doubts of others which he proceeds triumphantly to dispel. Yet he hesitates to the end. 'Our system throughout its detail is incomplete' (517), which implies a region of ignorance. 'Our conclusion, in brief, has explained and has confirmed the irresistible impression that all is beyond us' (549). This is not the hesitation of the man who tries to make his raft as seaworthy as possible; it is the assurance of the sailor who knows that he will reach his port, though well aware that neither the currents nor the islands nor the reefs he may encounter are charted; and of the harbour itself he can form no image.

This is the most we can expect to find in a philosophical teacher. In the region of our own private experience we follow the guidance of science and its method of step-by-step advance. As to the existence of a plan, or of reality behind appearances, science can never reveal it to us; but we can never be in doubt. Here, however, we must look

to the philosopher, or play the part of philosopher ourselves. Our certainty as to the underlying reality is a part of ourselves. We cannot question it, or we should be other than we are. It is faith, and it is self-expression. This is equally true of Schopenhauer and of Browning. There is something 'in which at our best moments we are all forced to believe', and that, as Bradley adds, 'is the literal truth' (494).

It is the literal truth for him who is so forced into belief. We are certainly not all forced into believing the same thing. But the office of the philosopher is to show us the conclusion to which he is driven and to affirm his own certainty. This is how I see the world, he says; this is the shape or mould into which I find that the details of life fit themselves. If he were not prepared to say this, with all the risks which it may entail, we should not listen to him. Deny it, he will continue, and see what will happen; affirm it with me, and recognize the control over your life which it gives you, the confidence with which you can advance into the unknown. We may call it certainty, because no more unshakeable certainty is possible. But certainty always involves the subjective as well as the objective. Certainty is what I myself am sure of; I can but offer others what is mine, that they may see whether it may not also be theirs. Hence we may equally well call it faith. For what is faith but the expressing of what we could not doubt without ceasing to be ourselves—what we must be prepared to die for, since without it we could not live?

In such a faith, indeed, Bradley admits a make-believe, an inner discrepancy such as pervades the whole field of religion. It is like the faith, he says, of a lover in his mistress (443). Yet by putting it in this way he is really dealing with a half-truth; the faith that acknowledges the possibility of a change, which may 'alter when it alteration finds, or seeks with the remover to remove'.

This is no more faith, in its majesty and fullness, than it is love. Yet his hesitation does not weaken his confidence about his world. The pattern, as Bradley is always ready to confess, will never be complete, until we know, as we never can know, all that there is to be known. The reconciliation will always lie on the other side of the horizon. But though it is not given us to penetrate into the secrets of causality—secrets which are themselves in the world of appearance—we shall still have the felicity of him who, in Virgil's great words, has trodden under his feet all terror, ruthless destiny itself, and the hungry beating of the waves of the river of death.

A 'STATIC' ABSOLUTE AND PROGRESS IN TIME

In our attempt to do full justice to Bradley's presentation of the Absolute, we have suggested that there are some elements in its complete comprehensiveness which he did not trouble adequately to set before us, but whose presence he would not deny. Even so, it is difficult to avoid some misgivings. For if the Absolute is identical with the universe, it would seem to be, in the words of William James, a 'block universe'. True, what is real is spiritual, and what is spiritual must surely both live and move and, as the Christian at all events would add, must love. The Absolute assuredly lives; for it is complete experience, and experience is life; but Bradley will not permit it to move, for movement implies change; nor to progress, for progress is relative. That 'progress is ultimate and final and the last truth about things' (500), Bradley will not allow; it must therefore be shut out from reality. Equally impossible is it to think of the Absolute as working for an end; the Absolute is neither will nor thought nor emotion of any kind (469-73); for all these imply the clash between idea and fact which constitutes appearance, and which banishes the self from the paradise of reality. If we try

to imagine that reality in which all experiences, including our own, whether of strife or loathing or rapture, and all activities, such for example as the struggles of capitalism and communism, find their harmony and their true existence, we are left with something which it is as difficult to welcome as to conceive of. It has the cold Aristotelian security of self-contemplation, the *noesis noeseos*; but it has not even the satisfaction of causing motion in others without any motion of its own. Nor can it know the joy of expansion as fresh experiences arise to be gathered continuously into its own world out of the world of experience.

Whether in sympathy or in scorn, Bradley would reject all such complaints. They attempt, he would say, to combine the incompatible. Once admit change, and there is an end of the Absolute; we have surrendered to Heraclitus. But this is the very place where we should refuse to be frightened by such threats. Granted that the Absolute is ever the same, and that perfection is something other than an eternal and asymptotic progress to perfection, yet we cannot admit that the Absolute, if it is to be the Absolute, the all-comprehending, has no place for the very elements without which our own life is unrecognizable. In other words, if all our experiences are concerned with our own changing environment, if life as we know it means constant loss and gain, progress and repulse, failure and success, love and hate, it is surely unreasonable to expect us to conceive of a life in which all these things are unmeaning.

In fact, Bradley himself has pointed the way to the very conclusion he forbids us to form. The Absolute is to be allowed to enjoy pleasure—a balance of pleasure over pain; ‘assume that in the Absolute there is a balance of pleasure, and all is consistent’ (157). Then must it not be conscious of the source of pleasure and pain? Must not its experience be the same as ours, though felt together

and not separately? Indeed, when we speak of all experience as being harmonized, we are not going wholly outside what is to a certain degree possible for us in our own world. But this is to find ourselves or something of ourselves in the Absolute, and to throw a bridge across the gulf that yawns between appearance and reality. It is impossible to make the distinction, which Bradley demands between experiences, the experience of the Absolute and our own. One experience may be narrower or wider than another; and so far as it is wider, it approximates to the experience of the Absolute; it has, in Bradley's words, more of reality. We can transform pain into something valuable by dwelling on the ends which it may serve. We can sublimate our dislike of an individual into a resolve to separate him from what is odious to us. We can find a joy in the discordant and ugly as we place them in a pattern in which simple beauty, instead of ejecting them, takes its place with them. The satisfactions of travelling and of arriving cease to be distinct. In the memorable words of Lessing, 'If God held all the truth in his closed right hand and in his left the single ever-living impulse toward truth, and said to me "Choose!", I should bow down humbly before his left hand and say, "Father, give me this; pure truth is for thee alone!"'

CHANGE AND PERFECTION

The real weakness of Bradley's Absolute would appear to be that, claiming to be comprehensive, it is in fact exclusive; that while it professes to welcome all experiences, it keeps some outside. It does not 'include and harmonize every possible fragment of experience'. It leaves the fragments in a kind of outer darkness, stretching their longing hands to reach the farther bank. This is what happens when we deny will, purpose, and personality to the Absolute. We claim that all our experiences in this changing life find a home where there is no change;

and then we bind up these experiences of ours with change and refuse them admittance. It is for the same reason that Bradley banishes God, as such, from the Absolute. But is change in itself really incompatible with the Absolute? The theological arguments for the immutability of God are familiar. Change in us imperfect beings, it is urged, may be for the better. Change in a perfect being can only be for the worse. But change is something more than the simple alteration from the better to the worse or from the worse to the better. Bradley emphasizes the metaphysical aspect of change. When A alters it is different at different times; but there cannot be alteration without sameness; A is still A; there are two sides of A, but 'the sides are not combined into an intelligible whole' (49). There are also, we may add, endless degrees of sameness and difference. There are the differences between the parts of a single and integrated artistic or musical composition, where the time series exists for the spectator or the listener, though even for them it may be transcended. There are the differences in the conduct of a strong and unified character where the time series is a wholly subordinate element. We may say, though in a different sense from Bradley, that time is always trying to commit suicide (207); but that it never succeeds, since though we may admit that the Absolute is beyond time, the temporal element which is essential to our own experience is never lost; without it, our experience would not be transcended in it, but destroyed.

If, however, we are prepared to grant that at the heart of perfection is the continuous realization of reality itself, if, that is, there is something higher than the unchanging existence of form, namely, the continual passage of matter into form, the Absolute can really possess the kind of experience that we know and value. It may be that 'the unity of these aspects is unknown . . . an experience of which, as such, we have no direct knowledge' (468);

but that is no reason for conjuring it out of all conceivable existence. This, in effect, is what Bradley ends by doing. And yet we cannot say this without suspecting that he would tell us that we are wrong. We complain that of the details of the being of the Absolute we are wholly ignorant. He agrees, but bids us remember that 'of its general nature we possess a positive though abstract knowledge'. This assurance we may accept with gratitude; but we must add that a mere abstract knowledge is not enough. You can look for no more, he would reply; would you expect the unlimited and whole to be such a one as yourselves, limited and hedged in at every turn of your lives? No, we rejoin; but it cannot be wholly other, if all the appearances which make up our experience find their home or locus in its abstractness; and do not you, we may continue, permit us to revel in the complete world and 'all its sensible glory,' in 'the boundless profusion of life which everywhere opens endlessly before our view' (490 f.)? With this question we must bring this chapter to an end. We may, if we please, recall Bradley's frank confession of perplexity when he is pressed; but he would probably ask us, in his turn, to remember that our selves are appearance, and that even when their experiences are thought of as included in the Absolute, the Absolute and its comprehensiveness will exclude or rather bring to an end all that constitutes for us their separate and vivid existences. The subject of the comprehensiveness of the Absolute is vital, and will call for further discussion in the next chapter, where we proceed to consider the Absolute in the light of the object of the Christian faith.

CHAPTER NINE

THE CALL FOR RELIGION

I

BRADLEY'S CONCEPTION OF GOD

WE are now familiar with the grounds for Bradley's distinction between God and the Absolute. Most philosophical thinkers, brought up, as we have noticed, in a theistic atmosphere, have assumed the identity of God and the world principle or the ultimate reality, and they have left religion to do its best with the identification. Some have been more influenced by what they have been aware of as the religious consciousness than others. That is to say, philosophy means for some a study of existence as we know it, which, it is hoped, will enlarge our conception of God, illuminating the object of our worship and deepening the demands which it makes on its creatures. For others, it means a conception of the whole in which all merely personal relations, however vital to religion, must vanish. An example of the contrast in recent times might be found in the two expositions of Hegelianism as set forth in John Caird's *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (1880) and McTaggart's *Some Dogmas of Religion* (1906). Bradley, however, is alone in the emphasis which he lays on the distinction, and on the idea that the whole, or reality, cannot be the object of religion. Is such a system, reducing the divine to the subordinate, any better than a kind of reverent atheism?

We already know Bradley well enough to be sure of the injustice of such a sweeping condemnation; and we have been reminded that the religious man's conception of God, when its implications are thought out, often approaches uncomfortably near the very conclusion that

has horrified some of Bradley's readers. Must the distinction be maintained, or may it be that Bradley himself has not gone far enough, and that what is demanded by religion itself in the object of its faith and adoration is compatible with the comprehensiveness of the Absolute, and even essential to it?

In the last chapter we considered Bradley's exposition of the Absolute, limiting ourselves for the most part to the task of exposition. We did, however, question whether a full statement of its comprehensiveness would not include the recognition of certain elements in the Absolute to which Bradley paid little attention or which he ruled out. Let us now approach the matter from the other side, asking how far Bradley's conception of God answers to what religion, or at least its higher forms, may be felt to require. We may then attempt to decide on an answer that would be given, by one who holds the specifically Christian conception of God, to the challenge or the denial with which Bradley confronts us.

We must start by noting that Bradley's own approach to what he says about God is from the side of religion rather than that of metaphysics. He does not assume that religion is to be called on to defend itself, still less does he regard it as a superstition, however perilously it may be exposed to superstitious ideas. Nor does he look on it, like most modern anthropologists, as an element in human culture to be studied objectively and dispassionately, like marriage customs or tribal loyalties. He looks at it from the inside. He writes as one who has no doubts to its value. The difficulties which he finds in it are more than merely intellectual; and they are difficulties which he points out, not as from some superior height, as it were, but as sharing them with us. This indeed he made clear in the concluding sections of *Ethical Studies*. No one could have written those pages who had not himself felt the stress and tension to which he refers. And if in what

follows no special reference is made to *Ethical Studies*, it is because all that we found there is implied, or carried farther, in *Appearance and Reality*.

Religion, he holds, is a necessity, not to be put on one side because of the 'open crimes' or the 'inward pollution' of which, in the course of its history, it may have been the parent (444). It has two roots, fear, and admiration or approval (438n.). These, indeed, though Bradley does not say so, might be combined in the feeling of awe; they recall Otto's expression, the 'numinous'. Its object may be called goodness. For religion, he proceeds, all is the expression of a supreme will and all things are therefore good. The finite self must seek for perfection, and in its belief that its 'evil is over-ruled and its good supplemented' this perfection is found. It knows itself to be perfect. Yet the struggle is always there. The self too is perfect, yet it knows; in Pauline language, that it has not yet attained. This involves the paradox with which we have become familiar, 'the moral duty not to be moral' (441). From this tension religion cannot escape. It may even be 'seduced', by this genuine impulse to be lifted above moral laws, 'into false and immoral perversions' (444). But all this implies man's relation to God. The very word relation, as we know, is ominous. Behind it lurks limitation, self-contradiction. Yet religion braves this danger. God, like man, is finite. He transcends this external relation, yet he finds his reality in union with man, as man finds his in union, through God's grace, with God (450n.). Thus, God is involved in an eternal contradiction. In religion, God 'is necessarily led to end in the Absolute, which for religion is not God' (446). What God demands, reality denies. We reach out to the all; but the all can never be reached. What we reach is God, that is, an appearance of the Absolute. But we must repeat, this is not therefore, to Bradley, illusion. And when Bradley tells us that in religion man reaches his reality through

God's grace, he is only recalling the completion of the Pauline phrase, 'I press on in order to take hold of that for which I have been taken hold of by God.' 4

NOT TO BE DISJOINED FROM REALITY

The nobility and elevation of such a view of religion and of God are unmistakable. And if Bradley's references to it, as to the splendours of nature, are few, they are not the less significant. And when we read of the mutual relation and attraction of God and man, and their complete interdependence, we begin to consider whether the term appearance is not misleading. It is not reality; yet is it distinct from reality? It would seem rather to be of the very stuff of reality. All appearances find their place in reality; reality would be empty without them. In reality they are harmonized. It is when we ask where this harmonization takes place that we are baffled. For in reality there is no time or place, no when or where. We therefore, as being in relation, cannot reach it. Reality for us, as long as we are where we are, is non-existent. It may be our soul's true home. Yet it is literally a Utopia, a Nowhere. Existence as we know it is our existence. The real significance of the Absolute for us is that our world of appearance, of frustration, contradiction, strife, is not the only world there is. But if this is to mean anything for us, it is that this contradiction is on the way to harmony; that beyond the relations (we cannot get rid of these spatial terms) that keep us apart is something that will bring us together. And this indeed is what we are conscious of already. We could not conceive of reality unless we were aware of reality coming into being here and now. Discords are gathered up in harmony, as we have observed, even in this world; ugliness passes into beauty, the separation between God and man into a union between the two.

But must we not go farther? Appearance must be

appearance of something for some one. Of what, and for whom? Surely, of reality, and for us; that is, appearance is reality as we know it. Bradley himself lays stress on the existence of numerous degrees of reality; and while some are far from the centre, others are near to it. It is thus only half the truth, if even that, to say that reality is unattainable by us in this world of appearance. Reality is the goal to which we move; and as far as we are moving to it, we are in touch with it. It is the complete whole which is there, even while the superfluous pieces of matter are being hacked away by the sculptor; it is perfect manhood which is on the way to reveal itself, while still held hidden in the infant and the adolescent.

This aspect of reality is emphasized in an acute discussion of the relation between God and the Absolute in Dr. Wodehouse's *One Kind of Religion* (1944). 'All reality, whatever it may prove to be,' affirms the author, 'is contained in the Absolute', but this does not exclude the Absolute from the time process. If the Absolute is the goal, it is also the progress toward the goal. Bradley would admit, with Bosanquet, that God is continually overcoming evil with good; that God is indeed the universe as accomplishing this; 'then surely the Absolute', says Dr. Wodehouse, 'represents the universe in its character of overcoming error by truth, which also suggests a time process'.¹

Before considering further the inclusion within the Absolute of the time process, in order to reckon the time process as existing within the Absolute, and also, as Dr. Wodehouse adds, within Deity, which she regards, not as a step to the Absolute, but as 'the perfection of the Absolute', we must observe another point. If the various appearances are to be thought of as on the way to reality, attaining to lower or higher degrees of it, we must also think of ourselves as attaining to the Absolute in the same

¹ *op. cit.*, pp. 153, 196.

manner. For although we commonly divide human beings into good and bad, speaking of the good will and the bad will, we are perfectly aware of the mixture of good and evil, alike in character and in intention. Save in the few exalted saints and the acknowledged villains (and it is difficult to be sure even of them), we can hardly speak about a positive distinction between good and bad. There is something to be approved of even in the worst of men, just as in a gang of thieves there must be some honesty and trustworthiness. Whether therefore we agree to speak of God as appearance or not, he must be confessed to be appearance in a very different sense from that in which time and space receive that name. As inextricably bound up with man, and as implicated in all man's moral endeavour, even if that endeavour be regarded as self-destructive, he is of far more importance to us than the Absolute. The antinomies of which we are conscious when we try to analyse his relation to ourselves are not intellectual or epistemological. They consist in the fact, as Bradley acknowledges it to be, that he is beyond us and yet within us; that we can and must conceive him as crowned with a perfection we can only dream of, even while it is the end of our aspiration; and that at the same time, if he were not here, touched with the feeling of our imperfections, we should cease to be what we are.

It would thus seem that God, as Bradley thinks of him, though on our side of the gulf that separates appearances from reality, has this in common with reality, that both are the goal of appearances; both involve a higher and a lower degree of approach; both assume the attainment of a final harmony out of the struggle and tension which pervade our own consciousness; but that while reality or the Absolute is the final scene or locus of this reconciliation, though doing nothing to effect it, God is certainly operative wherever life can be called, however imperfectly, either moral or religious. The main difference is

that God is thus bound up with man's changing experiences, as implicated in the time series, which has no place in and for reality; that God is confined to our field of experience while the Absolute gathers all possible experience into itself.

NOR FROM THE TIMELESS

To be certain of the correctness of this contrast is not easy; Bradley is too brief and too fond of paradox to allow of more assurance. Perhaps he would accuse such a statement of irreligion or insincerity. We could at least reply in his own words that 'all appearances for metaphysics have degrees of reality' (497). We might also ask whether the time series from which God is inseparable is very different from what must be the experience of the Absolute, if all appearances pass finally into the Absolute and if in all appearances more or less of reality is to be found. If the answer is given that this progress of appearance to its consummation in reality has no more to do with time, as we know it, than with space, we can but rejoin that the only experience we know is an experience which involves a time series, but that the two-fold existence of God, while we can only conceive of it through our own experience as something in time, of necessity transcends it; that it is, in fact, an example of that harmonization which Bradley bids us believe in, though to describe it to us he is quite unable. 'Present from the first, it supplies the test for its inferior stages, and as these are included in fuller wholes, the principle grows in reality' (497). These words, applied to the end, or the absolute individuality, might be taken as applicable to God. And if God is thought of as specially connected with our human strife for perfection, he may surely be regarded as one with the qualities that we love in nature, or at least in that nature wherein the object 'identifies itself gradually with the universe or Absolute' (494).

Thus, it is difficult to work out Bradley's conception of God while still keeping him short of the Absolute. Starting from the desire to preserve the religious character of God, and to avoid sublimating him into the impersonal *ens realissimum*, he opens a way for God, so to speak, to approach reality, or for reality to find itself described in terms of a divine being which satisfies man's religious needs and instincts. The ultimate satisfaction which he claims to find in the Absolute is really to be found, it would seem, in a being whom the Absolute would not disdain to regard as akin to itself. 'Short of the Absolute, God cannot rest; and having reached that goal, he is lost, and religion with him' (447). But why should this be? If all appearances lead to reality, why should God cease to be God when he has 'ended' in the Absolute? 'Because', Bradley would reply, 'religion is bound up with a finite God; a God who can only exist when not sundered from the relations which qualify him' (445). Surely this is to lay too much weight on a term. If the appearances find their fulfilment in the Absolute, there must be some relation between the Absolute and them.

And why should the falling apart of idea and existence be essential to goodness? This is to imply that goodness is linked with the sense of failure. Now it is clear that we may feel, at any one moment, that we have not attained; that when we have done our best, 'achievement lacks a gracious somewhat'; but it is equally clear, perhaps even more clear, to a humble and grateful consciousness, that a victory has been gained or an ascent has been won; that idea and existence are not falling apart but joining together. Indeed, this is far more essential to goodness than the sense of failure; for the sense of failure is the sense that goodness has not been attained; it is not a sense of goodness at all, but of its absence. It is only when idea and existence come together, however imperfectly, that we reach what we call goodness. God does not exhibit the

contradiction but the reconciliation. He stands, in fact, as it would seem on Bradley's own showing, at the point where appearance passes into reality. It would hardly be too much to say that God, thus conceived, is all the reality that matters to us, and that, apart from him, the Absolute may be left to look after itself.

This, however, is not the end of the matter; first, because to anyone who has felt the cogency of Bradley's dialectic, the Absolute cannot be left to look after itself in this cavalier fashion; and second, because God, as Bradley thinks of him, however profound and touching an element in human life and religion, is not the God of the Christian faith. In the pages where Bradley deals with God, we cannot fail to suspect a fragment of autobiography in which, indeed, many readers may recognize something of their own. This sense of being drawn out of oneself and thrown back on oneself; the loss of confidence; the inability to find the idea anything more than an idea; the refusal to give up the faith in God; the despair of being convinced that the experience is not a make-believe; and the resolve to regard it as the anchor of the soul—all this was known in Bradley's serious and wistful Victorian age, as it is known today. We can detect it in Matthew Arnold, in Clough, in Mark Pattison, in Tennyson; when men were stretching lame hands of faith, and faintly trusting the larger hope; or surrendered all claim to bliss and tried to bear. So gloomy indeed was the prospect of the time that J. R. Seeley could tell the Ethical Society, in his inaugural address in 1874, that 'never was the English mind so confused, and so wanting in fixed moral principle. . . . We have misgivings about morality; we suspect law itself to be a pedant, government to be a tyrant, patriotism to be an antiquated prejudice. . . . We have emotion, sentiment, thought, knowledge in abundance, only not character.'² Neither J. S. Mill nor George Eliot had

² Printed in *Ethics and Religion* (1900).

travelled much farther on the road of negation. A Charles Kingsley or a Robert Browning might raise a note of robust protest and confidence; A. C. Bradley, the philosopher's brother, allowed himself to echo them in his Gifford lectures; T. H. Green and Edward Caird were hardly conscious of what they had surrendered. Bradley was. We can only guess when the surrender was made. Perhaps before he left the Anglican shelter of his home; perhaps in his undergraduate years at Oxford. He certainly felt God as the power, not himself, making for righteousness. Yet later on, at the end of *Ethical Studies*, he pours his ridicule on Arnold for refusing to go farther than this. But the two essential elements in the Christian conception of God, as creator and redeemer, nowhere appear; still less, any reference to the incarnation and resurrection of Christ. Personality is discussed simply in relation to the Absolute, who is allowed to possess it (173), but it is dismissed almost contemptuously when looked at as an attribute of God (532). The claims of thought and will are put forward as possible alternatives for the Absolute, and are disallowed. Love, as regards either, is left unmentioned. When we contrast the very modest and limited role assigned to Bradley's God with a God possessing the attributes which the Christian faith has acknowledged in him for two thousand years, Bradley's God may be considered hardly worth defending. Nor has faith in such a being ever survived save as the weak descendant of some more virile parent. All the same, the God of appearance, in the activity which Bradley allows him, seems to be making his way into the realm of reality; and to observe this may rouse some doubt as to the ultimate distinction between the two realms.

WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF APPEARANCES

Before proceeding farther, however, we must notice that — there is a difficulty in Bradley's view of the Absolute which

he never seems to have felt himself, and which, therefore, he did not attempt to clear up, but which forces itself on anyone who tries to think out Bradley's system to its limit; a difficulty very similar to that which Aristotle has raised with regard to Plato's theory of ideas, unsympathetic as he seemed to be in doing so—the difficulty, as it was called, of the unsuspected third existence. If behind the mass of imperfect men, there is the idea or form of man, must there not be some third man in which the many and the one are synthesized? The Platonists had their answer. But what is to be said when we contemplate the coexistence of appearance and reality? Since the first is not to be ruled out as mere illusion, but in some way partakes of reality, we seem driven on to some higher being in which both have their place. Even if appearance were nothing more than illusion, we should find ourselves asking how that illusion came about. But when we keep to Bradley's account, or accounts, of appearance, the question becomes more pressing. A duality there is, admittedly. Which came first? Reality or appearance? How could one arise from the other? If everything outside reality is the experience of finite centres, there must be something beside reality itself, even if that something cannot exist apart from reality and is on the way to find its home in reality. And if there is this passage from appearance to reality, whether we think of it as in time or not (and to us, as we view the world of appearance of which we ourselves are a part, it must be in time), it would seem that some existence is needed to arrange that progress and to preside over it; or, if we make a further effort to divorce ourselves from the domain of time, an 'unsuspected third' to hold within itself both appearance and reality, thus giving to appearance its right to existence, a right which as we have seen Bradley both allows and denies.

All this Bradley does not consider. Certainly he does not attribute any such arrangement or origination either —

to God or to the Absolute. But this is only to leave us asking how Bradley's God came to be. It is hard to suppose that all the appearances, including God, could have the same origin and the same goal. On this, Bradley gives no light. To call them all appearances and not reality explains nothing; the distinction which Bradley so often draws between the *that* and the *what* would remind us that when we are dealing with appearances, which indeed are all that we can deal with, the fact of importance for us is not that they are distinct from reality—that time, the self, cause, the struggle for existence or for morality, are all alike appearances; it is that each has its own character; that each is a different kind of appearance from the rest, and that whether we think of their origin in order of time or thought or being, we cannot regard the question of origin as irrelevant.

The difficulty can be put in another way. All reality, we recognize, is rooted in experience. And our own consciousness is neither of things nor thoughts nor emotions but experiences. The universal therefore is universal experience. But experience, we have urged, must be experience of something. Solipsism, the view (if anyone has ever seriously held it) that the world is simply spun out of the individual like a spider's web, receives no quarter from Bradley. The experience of the Absolute is simply the sum and the meaning of all the imperfect and dissonant experiences of the individual finite centres who make up the world of appearance. Yet there must be something to make these appearances distinguishable from one another. Either our experiences are experiences of something that is not itself experience, or they are experiences of the experiences of others, which would seem to be impossible or nonsense. And when they become or are seen to be harmonized with the rest, they must be different from what they were, apart from or before the harmony which is theirs in the Absolute. The

question, indeed, recurs, and more formidably, whether experience is not being used in two senses; what we experience, and the act of experiencing.

But let us return to Bradley's exposition. The inconsistency and contradiction which is inseparable from experience extends beyond human consciousness. Few would be aware, save on mature reflection, of the contradictions which Bradley describes as involved in time and causality, any more than in their own individual lives. And yet it is difficult to see what meaning there could be, either in the contradictions in the world of appearance, or in the harmony of the world of reality, apart from the mind of man. There can no more be a question of discord without the previous appreciation of harmony than there can be a problem of evil apart from the belief in a God and a God of a certain kind. Bradley is never more eloquent or moving than when he describes the clashing of our experiences in a world of appearance. But like the experiences, the clash must be felt by someone, and felt as a clash. There must be something behind the appearance which manifests itself as a disturbance or a discomfort; there must be some consciousness for which it exists. This cannot be reality as Bradley describes it; for reality is harmony and it has nothing to do with our consciousness in the world of appearance. Indeed, as soon as we introduce or recognize the idea of appreciation and awe in our world, we are nearer to the universal consciousness of T. H. Green, with its goal of the common good in the sphere of practical activity, than to the static perfection of the Absolute.

AND OF THE VALUES

The whole of Bradley's argument implies that we are so constituted as to be conscious of this clash. We respond in a particular way, intellectual or emotional, to our —

experiences of nature. There can be no reason why we should feel admiration or horror in the presence of nature, or why we should be conscious of what we call ugliness or beauty, unless we are somehow provided with standards of value. And these standards are out of time. Doubtless, our application of them to our experiences is part of the time-series, and therefore, in Bradley's language, it falls short of reality; but (and here we are conscious of T. H. Green once more) to compare things which are in time implies a standard of comparison which is out of time. We bring something to the judgement of our experience which is itself prior to our experience, and if our experience as distinct from experience as a whole is appearance, this something must be different from appearance, and prior to it. Still more, the source and origin of these values and standards must be prior to experience. For a standard implies something more than itself. A standard, we say, is a positive conception of what is true or beautiful or useful. It may be called a value. But the moment we think of a standard as a value (and we cannot refuse to do so when challenged), we think of it as something that is given, and as something to be approved of, aimed at, sought for. This implies a relation between the values and ourselves which, so far from plunging both sides of the relation into appearance, constitutes their reality. A value which did not rouse our admiration nor make us value it, but lived in an atmosphere where no efforts or hopes of ours could penetrate, would be no value at all. And if we could not be moved by the sight of such excellence, if the values were less to us than the stars revolving at inconceivable distances above us in the silent heavens, we should be left without experiences; we should have ceased to be even appearances. We might say of the values in relation to ourselves what Bradley says of God; the values are not, unless I am; and if they were not, I certainly should be nothing (450n.).

We have already observed³ how little importance Bradley attaches to value or the values. And we are ill-advised to forget, when we read, for example, the writings of Sorley or of Inge, that what we consider beauty and truth and goodness are either of no value at all for multitudes of our fellow-men, or are only valued by them in a state or guise when they would be valueless and even repulsive to us. If this were all, it would be quite enough to relegate them to Bradley's world of appearance. But the fact remains that the majority of thinking beings have some standard of value. However strange and bizarre to us may seem their notions of beauty (although we ourselves may be able to admire the works both of Cimabue and Titian and Guingaud), they do know the difference between what they admire and what they do not. We shudder at some codes of tribal conduct, yet we can recognize an ethical basis for the verdict that condemns what is to us a virtue. Hence, as we seem forced to admit the values in some form, they must be prior in themselves, if not in our time-sequence, to our experiences. And we must go a step farther. The values are either objects that are valued or aspects that make us value them. In either case, they are such as to rouse our approbation or desire. They move us by being what they are, or they are the product of some mind or purpose which desires that we should be moved by them. It is impossible to suppose that all this aspiration, the very spirit that lifts man's life above the brute's, and can make the world we live in a thing of wonder and delight, is due to mere accident. We might bring ourselves to believe that a Democritean world of sweeping and swerving atoms came into being by itself, and without a creator, if only because the creator of such a world, did we try to imagine him, would be not only repellent but unintelligible. We might even imagine a self-caused world, where conscious beings buzzed as

³ Chapter 4, p. 88, and Chapter 6, p. 152, *supra*.

aimlessly and irritatingly as flies on a ceiling. But once we allow, as Bradley bids us allow, values which we recognize and pursue, however variable and fleeting both recognition and pursuit may be, we are in the presence of a thought and a will which is more than appearance. Reality, as Bradley describes it, waits for appearances to enter it and find their concord; but it does nothing to bring the concord about. It is not even an unmoved cause of motion. But if will is on one side of the line, that which is moved, it must also be on the other side, that which causes movement. Purpose can neither flow from purposelessness, nor lose itself therein.

At this point it may not be amiss to reflect for a moment on the immense advances in our knowledge of nature since the publication of *Appearance and Reality*; on the startling way in which physical phenomena as we have recently learnt to contemplate them conform to mathematical formulae; the accommodating fashion in which what appears to us as indeterminism obeys the laws of probability, and the wayward caprice of individuals is subdued to the ordered march of the whole mass; and still more the extraordinary capacities for adaptation, reproduction, mutation revealed by bio-chemistry and kindred studies. The world of nature, quite apart from our human consciousness, seems to unveil to our astonished eyes more and more of regularity and co-operation. And if, as Bradley would remind us, these have their existence only in the world of appearance, as being elements in our own experience, they would hint to us how much more there is of the harmony and order which constitutes reality in our world of appearance. Instead of being compelled to confess, as Bradley confesses again and again, that we cannot see how the passage is made from the one world to the other, we can increasingly see reality at work in appearance; and this means that we increasingly become aware of some agency at work upon

the world of appearance, rather than as a part of it. We may think of this agency as the God either of Bradley, or of the theist; it can hardly be what Bradley describes as the Absolute.

APPEARANCE NOT TO BE KEPT OUT OF REALITY

To carry further this argument would be welcome to all Bradley's readers who feel that his references to nature are tantalizingly brief, and that the ignorance of mathematics and science which he confessed, however worthy of sympathy, was a genuine though not a fatal handicap. But the foregoing claim to place in the world of reality something which Bradley would confine to appearance must stand or fall, ultimately, by the meaning we give to time. To Bradley, time is appearance; what is in time can never be real. And since purpose and failure on the one hand, and progress and deterioration on the other, involve the time series, the Absolute can know nothing of them, and any divine power which takes account of them is itself an appearance.

The unreality of time, and the impossibility of progress for the Absolute, as Bradley conceives it, or him, has been referred to in the previous chapter. There, the distinction between our experience, as involving the time-series, and that of the Absolute, as doing nothing of the kind, seemed to be unavoidable, even to a philosopher who entertains lively doubts on the excluded middle and the validity of negation.⁴ None the less, it is not easy to establish. We cannot deny that our own experience is of what is in time, nor can we conceive of any being that is outside time; and this quite independently of Bergson's distinction between duration and clock-time. Without memory there could be no experience, and without time there could be no memory. Even the *totum simul* can only be expressed in terms of time. For instance, in looking at a picture, we

⁴ See Chapter 8, p. 192, *supra*.

may first take in the separate parts and then become conscious of the whole, observing the way in which colour answers to colour, and the several lines make up together an impressive pattern. Or we may go the other way to work, first attending, though in a provisional fashion, to the complete scheme of line and colour, and then examining the details. At each step there is as it were both progress and completion; recognition of the whole and the journey from part to part. A musical composition illustrates the union of sequence and the *totum simul* in a different way. We are compelled to hear the different parts, bars or phrases or movements, as the composer brings them before us; but, as we listen on, each part is integrated with the rest; at any moment we hear all that we have heard before; and, on hearing the composition for a second or a third time, we are at each moment conscious of the whole. On the other hand, when we think of mathematical formulae or of standards of excellence, we are really contemplating that which we hold to be true or to stand firm under all conceivable conditions, and at all the times we could imagine. But even a formula necessitates a certain passage or progress in time. When we think of $7+5$, we are inevitably carried on to 12. The same thing must be said of the laws of conduct—the unwritten and imperishable precepts of the gods which no mortals can escape, hymned by Sophocles' Antigone.

PERFECTION IN TIME AS WELL AS OUT OF TIME

Thus, faced by the alternative, we must make our choice. There is here no contrast between the temporal and the timeless nor is it easy to see how the eternal and the timeless can be 'out of time'. What then of the maturity of our organism, the perfection which is the goal of moral endeavour, or the complete union of emotion and activity — which intense moral affection sets before itself? Some will

think of that as the last stage in growth, after which there can be no conceivable advance. Time's wheel would then run back or stop. But does the moment ever come of which such attainment can be predicated? Are we ever able to say that nothing more mature or perfect could ever be imagined? That would be to limit the perfect being by its own perfection. Even when ripeness, in the natural course of things, is followed by decay, the thought persists, that ripeness might have been more complete and satisfying before decay set in. And when we think of human excellence, and especially the excellence of self-realization or mutual devotion, where decay does not inevitably follow, and ought not to follow at all, we are conscious, not of successive betters, indeed, but of successive bests. 'Now', we say, 'we have reached the goal; this is the perfect moment; we are at the mountain top.' So we may be, compared with what has gone before. But this is only to find that the end is a new beginning. The goal is still in front. But we should never have known it to be in front if we had not attained it.

Perfection is at one and the same time both grasped and out of our reach. It lies, in this sense, out of the time series altogether. We give up the expectation that there ever will or can be a moment when we say 'the ascent is completed; there will be no more progress'. Indeed, an existence when there could be no progress would not be the infinite satisfaction of the Absolute, but the blankness of despair. On the other hand, progress is itself attainment. Perfection is reached just when, and because, we know that we have still to advance to it. This is not to choose to travel hopefully rather than to arrive. Travelling is arriving. To reach finally would be to lose. To be for ever reaching is to possess. A man's reach must exceed his grasp. It is thus and only thus that the non-temporal can be conceived. To put it in the simplest way, there is no conceivable moment when the perfect can be in process of

being reached; yet, we may say, perfection, which is outside the time-series of our experience altogether, as a positive and final goal, is with us at every moment, inspiring and drawing us on, eluding us and yet giving itself to us. Harmony is always being attained. The satisfaction which it brings is always there to be enjoyed. The time-series is real and valuable, because that which is outside it never ceases to animate and fulfil it. The one is the *pleroma* of the other. And if epistemological consistency still protests that such commerce with the temporal destroys all claim to reality, we must be content to let reality go; but with it will go all else that could be of value in any life that we know or could desire.

So far then we have seen reason to think that just as Bradley's God pushes his way into the Absolute, so Bradley's Absolute pushes its way into some wider sphere which Bradley would deny to it. Here it is not inappropriate to notice a view of religion in a work which seems almost to be based on a critical yet sympathetic study of *Appearance and Reality*. Bradley, we remarked previously, founded no school; but in the Gifford Lectures on *Ideals of Religion* by the philosopher's younger brother, to which some reference has already been made,⁵ it is hardly fanciful to discern a mixture of fraternal *pietas* and independent speculation. The Gifford lecturer makes no reference to the book which had appeared ten years earlier; nor does he suggest a distinction between the Absolute and God. But he describes religion as 'an attitude or activity of the whole soul or personality containing a mode of belief about God and about the self and the world in their relation to him . . . a direction of the will towards him or a union of the will with his will'.⁶ This means a dialectic process of denial and affirmation until man finds one life or force pervading all his activities.⁷ The lecturer holds that all the higher morality

⁵ Chapter 7, p. 172, *supra*.

⁶ *op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 46.

involves religion; but this is not far from what both *Ethical Studies* and *Appearance and Reality* mean by saying that morality passes out of itself into religion by devoting itself to some principle which it takes to be authoritative; while religion in its turn 'requires that we should be able to reach and unite ourselves with this perfect reality, and so should be able now to share its freedom from our imperfection'.⁸ For God who is 'the end of man attained'⁹ there can be no evil; and by faith man is reconciled to God and escapes from the evil around him. The finite is both negated and included in the infinite; their relation is that of appearance to reality; we are once more in the presence of a 'graduated scale from the lowest to the highest'.¹⁰ 'In the finite the infinite does appear or show itself; but does so only partially; if you take this partial appearance as absolute or total, or as the infinite itself, you are under an illusion.'¹¹

II

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF GOD

A. C. Bradley's Gifford Lectures are not a theological treatise, though the author writes as if his interest in the philosophy of religion were deeper than in the criticism and interpretation of poetry. He would claim that his conclusions hold good of all the higher forms of religion. But if we are to do justice to our question, we must now pass to the consideration of what is specifically Christian. It would obviously be impossible to review the whole prospect of Christian theology, or to analyse, in any detail, the Christian faith in God. It will be enough for our purpose if we select the elements in that faith which have been generally regarded as of cardinal importance, though they may be missing from Bradley's account of

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 132.¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 140.⁹ *ibid.*, p. 134.¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 227 n.

God or set down by him as inconsistent with the nature of the Absolute.

We may say, then, that the Christian faith has always seen in God a creative and redemptive power which itself implies a gracious purpose only to be set forth in terms of what we call personality. Such a power must be eternal, i.e. outside our time-series and yet involved in every part of it; and it must be omnipotent, liable neither to defeat nor frustration. We might even be satisfied with the majestic sentence which opens the Fourth Gospel: 'In the beginning was the word.' For there must have been someone to speak the word that was spoken in the beginning; it must have been creative—creative of such a world as ours; and redemptive, or it would have been contradictory and nonsensical. As redemptive it must not only have embodied a gracious purpose; it must be personal.

If we were to set such a being by the side of Bradley's Absolute we should have no difficulty in showing that, in contrast to the Absolute, it implies a view of our life and our world which inspires a courage, a buoyancy and a hope which is beyond anything that is possible for the Absolute's unreachable equability. To pass from the former to the latter is to pass from the warmth and pulsing variety of life, if not to the night where, as Hegel remarked, all cows are black, at least to the twilight in which the owl of Minerva takes wing.

The fundamental difference which marks off the God of theistic and more especially Christian faith from the Absolute is that the former is more than a perfectly harmonious existence. It brings that existence into being. Harmony is not only enjoyed but accomplished by it. Theism is not content to assert with Bradley that somehow experiences are reconciled in the Absolute. There must either be some further agent for this result, or the Absolute must itself bring about the reconciliation which on Bradley's showing is impossible. Theism boldly maintains

that the gap between reality and this imperfect world is already bridged, and that God, who is himself reality, is working on this side of it.

CLASH AND HARMONY

But this, it will be objected, is simply to set one assertion by the side of another. Not entirely; for when we look at the world of appearance, we find something more than a mere spectacle of clash or contradiction, the 'ruin' of anything intelligible or satisfactory. We have already considered the witness of science. Taking science to mean a department of ordered experience, we can say that the various sciences in their own ways point not only to contradiction but to contradiction *and* reconciliation, antithesis *and* synthesis. In astronomy, the synthesis comes about through the extension of our own observations, removing what seemed to be contradiction in our imperfect knowledge. This is at least partly true in chemistry and physics, though even now nuclear physics points to a regularity lying behind or beneath apparent indeterminacy, while the combinations of chemical units seem inexhaustible. In biology, the ancient principle of the *vis medicatrix naturae* has exemplified itself in countless unlooked-for directions; and the capacity for co-operation, internal and external, on the highest and the lowest scales alike, shows that the blind struggle for existence (if it must still tolerate that adjective), though universal, is universally subordinate. Apart from this, no law of natural selection or the survival of the fittest could have saved life from extinction. Every fresh discovery shows the living unit, from the cell or the gene onward, looking to the future, or acting as if it did. If there were no purpose superimposed upon the world, we could count on no regularity and venture on no interpretation. Even the interplay between relations and qualities might suddenly come to an end.

When we pass to the contemplation of human society, the conclusion is more impressive, only because it is open to common observation. History, morality, religion, all show the interaction of opposites on one another; self-assertion and self-repression, struggle and mutual help. But these are not mere opposites, reducing one another to the status of appearance; they are linked together. The self, whether as an individual or a group, naturally proceeds to gain its ends by asserting itself; but as naturally also by co-operation with other selves, whether in the family, the village, or the tribe, or the larger aggregation of the community. And where the two principles clash (and such a clash is never entirely absent), it is still by subordination and combination that the ends of the self are obtained.

Such an appeal to the content of our experience is not made by Bradley. But he goes far enough, as he does when he is dealing with morals and religion, and even with the effects of values upon us, to say that all experience means collision; surely then he is bound to go farther and ask whether collision is the last word of experience. If on the other hand he falls back on the doctrine that is laid down as fundamental in his third chapter, that relations and qualities are unintelligible either with or without each other, we are entitled to submit his argument, conducted as it is on the plane of the abstract, to some more concrete test, and to ask, as we have just been asking, if a 'relational way of thought', however unable it may be to give us more than appearance (33), cannot provide us with a rationale of the world in which our thinking has to be done.

THE MEANING OF CREATION

This transformation of a universe of contradiction into a progress from confusion to order points to the very element from which Christian faith takes its start. 'In the

beginning was the word.' The utterer of that word meant the world to be what it is; and we, with our own experience of it, can enter into that meaning. We cannot here discuss the precise meaning of creation. It will be enough to say that creation is a Hebraic and Christian rather than a Greek idea. The early Ionians asked what the world was made of, how it worked, and how multiplicity came out of unity. God, when they spoke about him (and recent writers, Jaeger and others, have argued that their attitude was profoundly religious), was the spirit or principle working within the universe, controlling its change and growth. The godhead, to them and to their successors, was as far removed from the Olympian deities of Homer as from the cults of the various Greek communities. It was equally far from the God who in the beginning said 'let there be light'. A divine and personal power standing outside and above the universe and, as its maker, in supreme control over it, like the potter over his clay, would have struck the Greeks as irrational or absurd. It is true that there is a doctrine of creation in Plato's *Timaeus*; but the creator is a demiurge, a craftsman, working to a pattern. And Aristotle's characteristic view of potentiality and realization is one of immanence rather than transcendence. To Hebrew and Christian faith, God is transcendent before he is immanent.

No one now supposes that creation means the separate manufacture of all the innumerable objects of sense, nor indeed, *sans phrase*, creation *ex nihilo*. Before we can usefully consider the impossibility of creating matter from the non-existent, we must have a more definite conception of what we mean by matter. Creation, if it is to be intelligible at all, must be interpreted on the analogy of human activities, the creation of a mechanical design, a building, or a work of art. Here, the plan is everything; the actual movements, as of paint to canvas, or of the hand on a musical instrument, have nothing to do with

creation as such. Creation, or the act of the first cause, must mean the originating and maintaining of the world of conscious experience, whether we regard that world as having first come about when there was any human consciousness to be aware of it, or allow it, paradoxically, to have existed ages before anything corresponding to man had been produced. Even Bradley's world of appearance and reality suggests, as every conceivable world must, a designer; but a world in which reality is all the time at work transforming the confusion of appearance does more; it suggests a designer who from the beginning, before our time-series commenced, uttered his purpose in the universe as we, in our own imperfect fashions, may contemplate it. 'Morality, love', says Hegel, 'mean the giving up of particularity, or of the particular personality, and its extension to universality, and so too is it with the family and friendship; for there you have the identity of the one with the other. Inasmuch as I act rightly to another, I consider him as identical with myself. In friendship and love I give up my abstract personality and in this way win it back as concrete personality. It is just this winning back of personality by the act of absorption, by the being absorbed into the other, which constitutes the true nature of personality.'¹² We may very well mean more than this when we talk of personality in God; we shall hardly mean less.

CREATION AND PERSONALITY

Moreover, to interpret reality or the Absolute in this way makes it come alive. Life means activity. In our world of finite centres, as we call them, following Bradley, life is purposive action on our environment. Can the Absolute know less than this? In Bradley's scheme, indeed, it is not easy to see what the Absolute has to do, save to enjoy its

¹² *Philosophy of Religion* (Engl. Trans.), Vol. III, pp. 24, 25, quoted by C. F. D'Arcy, *Idealism and Theology*, pp. 222 f.

own unprogressive and unalterable perfection. And yet, as we are told, all our experiences, both of cognition, emotion, and will, come to rest in the Absolute. True, in the Absolute, there is perfect harmony among the experiences; yet surely they are still our experiences, or how can our experiences be said to survive at all? These experiences are constantly changing, even when they seem most stable; the more constant is any purpose of which we are aware, the more steadfastly and effectively we are acting on our environment and being acted on by it. With a high degree of constancy in purpose and emotion we reach personality. Bradley does not deny personality in some sense to the Absolute; but he scarcely welcomes it; and its crown, the active and joyous co-operation of love, is never mentioned. But to say that all our experiences are consummated in the Absolute's harmony, and yet to deny a place in the Absolute for the most conspicuous harmonizing element in our experience, is sheer contradiction. 'This', we shall be told, 'is anthropomorphic.' The criticism is made whenever something familiar to us in man is found or asserted in God. If what anthropomorphism in this sense may assert must be denied by more exact thought, nothing can be left to God, even to Bradley's God, still less to the Absolute; since every possible predicate of the Absolute is derived from the world of human intercourse. But if reality is to be thought of as working in the universe of appearance, then the very factors which draw appearance nearer to reality, producing that harmony and order without which no appearance could continue, is not an illegitimate projection into the idea of reality. It is rather the divine appearing in the human. Anthropomorphism in this sense should be called theomorphism. We may argue that reality has personality because we have it. It is equally true that we possess it because, when we conceive of truth as creative, reality communicates itself to us.

Much of the reluctance to credit God, or the Absolute, with personality, rises from the fact that personality is commonly held to be the mark of a person, and a person is regarded as necessarily limited, existing in a world of persons, each repelling as well as attracting the rest. The Absolute is certainly not in this sense a person; nor, to the theist, is God. But, as C. C. J. Webb has contended,¹³ it is theologically more correct to speak of personality in God than to affirm the personality of God or to call God a person, in spite of the Athanasian Creed. The personality of God is an obscure and ambiguous expression. It might mean that God is a person, like ourselves, or that he is the one complete person, or that he possesses the attribute of personality. In any case, personality can hardly mean anything else than what we think of as constituting our personal existence—thought, will, emotion, the sense of community, the impulse to co-operation, hope, and love. Personality must be distinguished from individuality. Individuality is disjunctive; personality is connective. As an individual, I am distinct from other individuals; in Bradley's language, I am an appearance. As a person, I co-operate with other persons; I share with them, grow into them, and therefore possess at least some degree of reality. Thought and will, friendship and admiration, all imply integration with other members of the human society; as they develop, personality increases. It does not indeed follow from this that God, or the Absolute, is a person. What does follow is that personality, as the great integrating force in human and perhaps more than human life, must have its existence and its origin in the whole of reality. Several writers, like Dr. Wodehouse, in the book previously mentioned, would deny what they call 'personal qualities' to the supreme reality, the 'concrete universal' of good which they regard as the object of worship; but they seem to find in this universal

¹³ *God and Personality*, pp. 61-5.

a response, a source of courage and hope and steadfastness which can only be found in the non-personal, such as a church, a family, or a nation, by analogy.

Yet surely we must go farther. The power behind and around us in our experiences must be the source of all that is valuable in them, to us as to itself. Bradley allows that the Absolute can rejoice in beauty and justice and order, even if it is unable to 'drink delight of battle with its peers' or to enter into the stern joys of endurance and courage, and can presumably know nothing of the love that lays down its life for its friends. But if these constitute the finest parts of our experience, they must have had their source, if they had any source at all, in the Absolute. Nor is their creation the work or result of one decisive moment. Admiration, hope, and love are not called into being in this fashion, and left to their own devices. Creation for them means also maintenance. If the Absolute is the author and completer of all experience, it is the source, as it is the sphere, of all our human emotions. But while with us these emotions move in a world of uncertainty and clash like ignorant armies in the night, with it there can surely be nothing to limit or degrade; scorn becomes the scorn of scorn; hate is the hate of hate; and the light of love in it—in him—is unerring.

HOW THEY ARE RECONCILABLE WITH SIN

So far, we have emphasized creativity and the personality which must go with it, in the Absolute, if the Absolute and the harmony which is in the heart of its being is to be intelligible. But we cannot stop here, for harmonization is not a simple process. Creation, as the origination and maintenance of a plan by which order is brought out of confusion, takes place beneath our eyes. What, however, we cannot fail also to observe is that the purpose often entails struggle, distress, agony. To the philosopher,

writing from some calm retreat, it may be a small thing to say that evil is to be overcome with good. But to those who allow themselves to contemplate actual evil in the world around them, if but for a short time, the matter is very different. Hegel may have listened unmoved to the guns of Jena; he knew nothing of the depths of a displaced person's misery and despair. It is not enough to think of the insolence of office and the spurns which patient merit of the unworthy takes; we have to force ourselves to remember the greed, the lust, the rage, which leave the grim maxim, *homo homini lupus*, far in the rear of the truth; the long centuries of oppression through which the masses of the people in every continent have lived within the grasp of starvation, the dumb sufferings of men, and still more of women, from disease and cruelty in every generation, and the unimaginable distresses which have marked the movements of human hordes and armies, turning the beneficence of nature into a heartlessness like that of man himself. And what the pages of the past have revealed, our experience has made us recognize and tremble at in the present.

We may grant, if we like, and as we must, that the human race endures, and even rises, through all the misery of man's inhumanity to man; it would be absurd to suppose that we are simply watching the sublimation of evil, even when it is understood, not merely as discomfort and misery or frustration or failure, but as that which ought not to be. In every age, and not least in our own, we are faced with something more than revolt against the morally good; with a positive devotion to pride and sensuality, which the religious man, who hates it, calls sin, and out of which the irreligious man constructs a travesty of religion. To call this a defect of love seems a ludicrous misapprehension of the horrible truth. Sin corrupts the nature till at last the sinner, coming to himself cries out in despair that there is no health in him

He must be born again. Yet who can say what hidden elements there may be, even in the most desperate, through which that new birth can be accomplished? Nowhere has human sin been looked at with a more unflinching gaze than by the prophets of the Hebrew scriptures and in the epistles of the New Testament. The prophets were not philosophers; but they were monotheists, and this means, as John Oman has pointed out,¹⁴ that 'they were enabled to face the darkest ills of life in the assurance that God's meaning is in all and his purpose over all. . . . No evil could hinder life from being one moral sphere, and experience from being one triumph of faith.'

The writers of the New Testament, occupied less with the fortunes of the nation and its neighbours, and more with the destiny of the individual on the one hand and of the whole of mankind on the other, are equally convinced that the world of sin is the world of redemption, and that the end of this gracious saving purpose of God, revealed in the actual life on earth of one who can be called by no higher name than his Son, is the reconciliation of all mankind to God. Where sin abounds, grace is yet more abundant. Thus, sin has to be attacked or, more mysteriously, transformed, by the sympathy which feels the shame of another's wrong-doing and the love which resolves that by patience and militant and humble purity the stain on another's character shall be washed away. If there is a problem of evil, there is also a problem of good. Nothing is more surprising and perplexing, more pathetic and ennobling in human life, than this redemptive activity. Its energy is no less undeniable than the selfishness and ill-will against which it reacts. It is indeed the supreme example known to us of the process by which chaos is changed to harmony. If we had lived in a world of evil, but not of sin, we should never have seen redemption in its true radiance. If then we are right in finding

¹⁴ *The Natural and the Supernatural* (1931), pp. 448f.

creativity in the Absolute, that is, the creation of a world in which good is redemptively brought out of evil, and if our experiences here exist in a higher form in the Absolute, we must be prepared to acknowledge the Absolute to be not only creative but redemptive, and to recognize in its activity an intensity of energy surpassing any emotion that we can endure to feel at the sufferings and the wickedness of mankind.

Moreover, to assert this of the Absolute, as of the God of theistic faith, is the only way in which we can affirm its timelessness. For what is timeless, as we have seen, is not the contrary, nor the contradictory, of what is in time. It cannot be known save through the temporal. The process must be real, or the end would not be real. Perfection would not be intelligible unless it were conceived in relation to imperfection. This is certainly true of our experience, as far as it goes; and no one has brought out the truth more clearly than Bradley himself. To be doing our utmost at each moment of our endeavour, and to keep the thought fixed on the assurance that that utmost will be steadily exceeded, is at once the true progress and the true attainment. Such a conviction can and ought to apply to all such moments; if it came to an end, there would not be perfection but stagnation. We need not repeat what has been already said.¹⁵ We will only point out that if in our own experience the timeless and the temporal can and do co-exist, we have no ground for supposing that the timelessness which we may attribute to the being of the Absolute must be incompatible with its presence in the time-series in which we live.

EVIL AS EXISTING FOR GOD

This view of evil, both as suffering and as wickedness, raises in a more acute form the difficulty of thinking of the God of the theist as being, like Bradley's Absolute,

¹⁵ p. 194, *supra*.

the whole of reality. If we go as far as to claim that God, in any way in which we can conceive of him, must be creative and also redemptive, can we think of the evil power which he redeems or brings to an end as being actually, like good, within him? For Bradley, as we have seen, the difficulty hardly arises. Evil is appearance; the Absolute is reality; and although the Absolute, it seems, may be conscious of pain, evil as such cannot exist for it. It is got rid of as easily as by that body of believers which argues that as God is good, he can know nothing of evil; and what he cannot know cannot be real, since he knows everything that is. But we have found it impossible to separate appearance and reality in this hasty fashion. Granted that evil is only appearance, it enters into our experience as something that we dislike and try to avoid. And it must enter into his. His very perfection demands that he should deal with it rather than be infinitely removed from it.

This, however, it may be said, brings back the old contradictions and uncertainties from which Bradley has been doing his best to deliver us. It is to imagine such a power as H. G. Wells described in his *God the Invisible King*; a being who is not only on the side of righteousness, and who makes for righteousness, but who is engaged in a long and desperate struggle for it. He may be victorious in the end; his human allies hope and expect that he will be; but the struggle is still undecided. So far from being supreme and omnipotent, God is, at best, at his labours in the world, like another Heracles. But for this argument we are already prepared. The supreme is neither the unreachable nor the dispassionate. Victory for him is more than the happy end of a doubtful combat. Yet equally, it is not the absence of all foes. If the world is his creation, he must have designed it so that foes should be there. But if they are there, they are meant to be got rid of. His creative plan was also, we saw, redemptive. He is

not defied. We may tremble at the floods of evil in the world. We can only think of the creator as carrying on his redemptive work in his world, and calling on his creation to co-operate with him.

We are thus released from thinking of God, as Bradley appears always to think of him, as immersed within his world, struggling in it, and perhaps defeated. But have we not gone to the other extreme, to think of God once more as over against the world, even if he is actually acting on it, influencing it, redeeming it? Can we indeed do anything else? Can we identify God with the sum of things as known to us, whether we call it experience, sensations, or existence? Would not this be to revert to a crude pantheism, which at a stroke would sweep away all moral and aesthetic and religious distinctions, if it did not actually bid us worship the lowliest of our fellow-creatures, or bow down to wood and stone?

FALSE AND TRUE PANTHEISM

We can expect to do nothing else if we think of the whole in terms of quantity, the radical error of all pantheism. We are equally wrong whether we regard God as to be identified with all sensible objects or natural phenomena, or with all sensations or emotions. And it would seem impossible to make a singular noun the predicate, or the subject, of the whole of things or of all possible experiences. Nor again, if the whole is to be taken quantitatively, can we regard God as the whole. God is all that we cannot be, as opposed to what we are, whether this is understood as an affirmation of his perfect goodness and beauty as against our actual or relative badness and ugliness, or of his reality as against our appearance. The only way to avoid this last conclusion is to deny that appearances are more than illusions; and this Bradley will not allow us to do. R. L. Nettleship hinted at the way out of the difficulty. 'Pantheism is wrong', he says, 'if it means that

God is all things; but it is right if it means that there is *nothing* in which you cannot touch God; i.e. nothing which you cannot love, nothing which you need fear, nothing out of which you cannot make something, nothing in which you cannot be something.¹⁶ This is not what is generally meant, either by its friends or its foes, as pantheism. But Nettleship has pointed to a profound distinction, which we may now approach from another angle, that of a more careful treatment of the word existence.

Appearances exist, though not in the way in which reality exists. But we have already seen the weakness of what is an ingenious but over-simple distinction. The subjects of which existence is to be predicated are not divisible into beings which change and beings which do not. Life as meaning activity must also mean change. The world appears as the scene of a change which is no better than decay. All things travel on to their dissolution. If we think of God as life, and as life however it is manifested, we cannot find him everywhere in a world of decay and death. But Bradley would himself remind us that even in a world of appearance, every experience is joined to every other. It is the lesson of the flower in the crannied wall. There are no 'chance' occurrences. The aimless fluttering of the leaves on the aspen, and the capricious ripples on the surface of the lake, are the results of movements in the air in which perhaps the whole solar system is implicated. The tottering steps of old age are the inheritance of countless generations of the past, equally with the dancing frolic of the child.

'See all nor be afraid.' That is what Bradley would bid us do. Falsehood and error cease at last to perplex us. They lie in isolation. Evil dwells in experiences that form a part but not the whole of reality. This is the lesson of some of the world's finest imaginative literature. When,

¹⁶ *Remains* (1897), Vol. I. n. 80.

at the conclusion of a great tragedy, the whole world of human values has come crashing down around the dying hero, why does not the spectacle leave us rebellious or desperate? The answer is that his sufferings and death have resulted from a collision with a higher order which imparts something of its own nobility to what otherwise would be frustration or defiance. It is A. C. Bradley who has pointed out that in the tragedies of Shakespeare 'man is not represented as the mere plaything of a blind or capricious power, suffering woes which have no relation to his character and actions'. In *Lear* itself, the most terrible of all, 'the total and final result is one in which pity and terror carried perhaps to the extreme limits of art, are so blended with a sense of law and beauty that we feel at last, not depression, and much less despair, but a consciousness of greatness in pain and of solemnity in the mystery we cannot fathom.'

This impression, that the hero, in spite of his own failure, 'is rather set free from life than deprived of it' when viewed as part of the whole, 'implies that the tragic world, if taken as it is presented, with all its error, guilt and failure, woe and waste, is no final reality, but only a part of reality taken for the whole, and, when so taken, illusive; and that if we could see the whole, and the tragic parts in their true place in it, we should find them . . . so transmuted that they had ceased to be strictly tragic . . . the suffering and death counting for little or nothing, the greatness of the soul for much or all'.¹⁷

GOD AS PURPOSE AND PATTERN—THE TRINITY

It has been worth while to quote these sentences if only because the Professor of Poetry at Oxford has been illustrating the antithesis between appearance and reality, the part and the whole, from a sphere to which his brother seldom chose, to our loss, to refer. But we have already

¹⁷ *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904), pp. 279 ff.

begun to see in reality, or the Absolute, something more than the whole, transforming appearances, as it must do, by the very law of its being. And when we have come so far, we can summon confidence to face a further terror, the universality of death. Philosophers have generally left death alone. To the Greeks it was a riddle (501 ff.). To the Hebrews it was a nightmare. Bradley turns from it. If God, or the Absolute, is life, why is death everywhere? But, once we refuse to segregate the portent, it becomes less terrible. It becomes not an isolated defiance of life, but an incident in the great circle of existence. It is not even the end of the matter of the dead body. Who can say that it is the end of that life by which the body was animated? The whole of creation, as we must conceive it, is one vast process, dominated by one comprehensive purpose. Where that purpose is, there, it would follow, is God, the creator. What we may consider the failures, the blots on creation as we know it, are not evidence that God cannot be there, any more than clumsiness in the infant or disease in the adult are evidence of the absence of life. Living organisms are those which nourish and reproduce themselves and then are subject to decay and death. But life goes on from one generation to another.

Even the lifeless persists in some new form. Modern physics, which has done so much to revolutionize the universe for us, cannot yet convince us that those centres of energy which we used to consider as matter are subject to annihilation. What we are aware of is an immense process on the one hand, and an immense pattern on the other; both of them far too wide to be grasped by our tiny powers of perception, but both of them exhibiting unity in multiplicity, harmony in seeming confusion; a unity and harmony which grow clearer the more we succeed in seeing the various elements together in all their endless relations and inter-actions. In all this, dividing lines can no more be drawn between

the living and the lifeless than between the good and the evil, or between the different classes and species into which we divide objects in our fields of observation. Slowly and tentatively we learn to see bits of the pattern in the processes which we can detect. Sometimes they delight us, sometimes they horrify. Often we think we lose the pattern altogether. But since it is there, we must conclude that it is everywhere. If it were not, it could not be a pattern at all. When therefore we ask what is the relation of God to the universe, whether he is to be thought of as an element therein, ruling it as superior it may be, yet only a part of the whole, or whether he is himself the whole, so that nothing is outside him, we can now recognize him as both the pattern and the process, at work throughout the whole field of possible experiences. It is not unnatural to think of a universal mind which controls the universe; the being who dwells in the light of setting suns and does not simply roll through all things, but constitutes their real being. *Mens agitat molem.*

Pattern and process, thus taken together, bear witness to a purpose without which they could not exist for our understanding, and, because of this purpose, they are at once complete, and, as it still appears to us, incomplete. They do not simply control existence; they are existence. There is nothing outside them, if we can use the term 'outside' at all, save the changing and flickering shadow-like shapes which for us cave-dwellers (we cannot get away from Plato's cave), in the fire-light of our imperfect comprehension, they cast on the wall which is the field of our vision. Thus we may say that God, like Bradley's Absolute, fills the whole world of reality. But he does more. He is not, as reality, separate from appearance. He is at home in both worlds. The continuous emergence of the pattern in the process makes the two worlds one, both of them filled by him. Such a faith shows us God as the

eternal and the changeless, even while it looks forward to the time when it will know him as it cannot know him yet, and when all things will be seen to be his *pleroma*, the full content of his infinite being.

There is only one further step to take. Starting from Bradley's world of appearance, we turned to the Christian view of a power at once creative and redemptive. But to think of such a power involves the reflections which gave birth to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. To speak about the creative and the redemptive in God is to speak, in the language of Christianity, about the Father and the Son. But neither the creative nor the redemptive could affect or touch us unless there were something that we had in common with them, and something which also moves the world we know around and outside us. The process can only be carried on, the pattern can only be worked out, when it does not act on its material from the outside but moves it from within, like the breath within our own lungs which, drawn in from the air without us, we share with the whole world. The conception of the Trinity has been made puzzling or even repulsive by the subtleties which have been employed by theologians to separate heresy from orthodoxy. Its strength lies in the fact that, as is shown by much of the language of the New Testament, it is impossible to think of one 'person' in the Trinity without the others; that in the experience of the believer, as in his interpretation of the world, each of the three, whether we call them processes or functions, creation, redemption, and pervasion, implies the other two.

Philosophy is not hereby set forth as either the *ancilla* or the *domina* of theology. Nor is the claim of reason to judge revelation, whatever Bradley may have privately held, asserted or denied. In the last resort, revelation, like any of the sciences, or any authority that claims our intellectual obedience, must justify itself at the bar of our

reasoning powers. But neither philosophy nor science, as Bradley was assured, can ever cut itself loose from faith. The Christian comment on *Appearance and Reality* can be summed up in a sentence: given the conception of a universe at once coherent and comprehensive (and what else could a universe be?), it will only make sense if it is pervaded by him whom the Christian has learnt to call the Father in Heaven.

CHAPTER TEN

REALITY AND GOD

BRADLEY'S REALITY; CONSUMMATION AND HARMONY

WE can now return to our question, What is reality? Bradley's answer is that reality is harmony, integration, unity. There is no such thing, apart from our own individual consciousness, as failure or contradiction or strife. All that disconcerts or disappoints us, all the shocks or setbacks which dispirit us, are, in the proper sense of the word, unreal. They have no independent existence of their own. They are like a wave on the surface of the sea. We have no business to be distressed by them. There can be no place for feelings of despondency when we know that the circumstances that might rouse them are due to our own imperfect apprehension of life, and, rightly understood, bear their witness to the underlying rationality of the universe. This is more than what ordinarily passes as Stoicism, the refusal to shrink before pain, to surrender to evil. 'If the fire smokes, you can leave the room.' Nor is it the popular psychology which instructs us that if we deliberately turn our attention away from the unpleasant, we shall cease to be conscious of it or at least to be affected by it. It has more in common with the profounder Stoicism of the Hymn of Cleanthes, the conviction that the universe is rational and that reason, which means harmony and co-operation, is the maker and substance of all things. Reason could thus be identified with Zeus, the supreme living power which is to the world what the soul is to the body.

As we have seen, Bradley will have no deification of the Absolute. It is harmony; but it does not cause harmony.

It is the one all-embracing experience; but it does not itself form our imperfect and partial experiences into one. It does not link all perplexing meanings into one perfect chord. It does not put its enemies under its feet. It can only assure us, as we contemplate it, that they are there; that they must be there, though we cannot imagine how they come to be there. Indeed, to us they are not there; they cannot be there. And yet all the while we know they must be. Our assurance, to adapt a paradox with which Karl Barth has familiarized us, arises out of the sense of the impossibility of our conclusion. It is because of our failure to experience a harmony which we know must exist that we are sure of its triumph in the Absolute; and this, as Bradley would warn us, not in the future, for the category of time cannot be applied to the Absolute, but now and always.

Such is the universe as Bradley conceives it. It is one, and, as one, perfectly integrated. We ourselves walk by faith; yet our faith is purged from all shred or taint of doubt. We must not look for those moments of ecstatic vision which some mystics have claimed and all may have desired. We shall not expect to be lifted out of ourselves, habitually or momentarily, into a sense of unification with the all. Hence, we shall not attempt, like the mystic, to retire from the world, or even to take shelter behind a wall while the wind is whirling the dust outside. Nor shall we be disappointed that we cannot see the pattern which the spirit is weaving at the roaring loom of time. The very fact that the spirit can have nothing to do with the loom of time is the cause of our assurance. We do not set ourselves to endure an unhappy present believing that it is but for a night, and that a shout of joy will come in the morning. The distinction between the present and the future is itself unreal. Our belief will be as independent of authority or revelation as was that of the medieval theologians who rested their system on the philosophic

consideration of the existence of a first cause, a prime mover, and the *analogia entis*. So far Bradley.

Bradley, however, as we are already aware, would not allow this parallel. The conception of a first cause, as he maintains, is beset by difficulty and contradiction. It can never lead us to reality. We only reach certainty when we contemplate the nature of experience, individual and universal. The wider our own experience, the higher its degree of reality. The true attitude to life, therefore, is not withdrawal, but poise. All the gifts of the austere virtues, the unswerving courage, the exaltation of soul, the superiority to the dear delights that distract the pilgrim, may be ours; and by their side, the constancy of spirit, the unruffled calm of those who can acquiesce in human ignorance because, on the one central point, any uncertainty is impossible.

SATISFACTION AS THE RECOGNITION OF THE FACT OF HARMONY

Bradley knows what he is doing. Religion he here leaves behind. Most religions, with varying emphasis, have rested themselves on a God who is cause, and have offered two reasons for consolation in the trials of life; the hope of a future of happiness and bliss to compensate for the warfare and distress of the present; and the possibility of finding peace and blessedness in the midst of anxiety and strain here. Christianity has its message for both worlds, present and future. Bradley does not bid us wait for a time when the shadows of appearance shall have passed away. When such a time comes, if we can talk of time, our own selves will have ceased to be. We are to remember that the shadows exist only for us. If there is a promised land, it is a land which we enter by means of a thorough-paced intellectual discipline. We conquer one contradiction, in fact, by means of another. Plunged into a world of incoherent relations which turns

all our experience into appearances, we affirm ourselves as living in another world, beyond relations, of reality. This means that we recognize appearances for what they are; the self, the will, pain, pleasure, progress, time, and so on. We are already familiar with his demonstration that each of these, even the self, is unreal; but, however we may wish to follow it, we cannot deny that all these are to us not appearances but the very factors of reality. Can we conceive of reality in which there is no such thing as the self? After what has been said, it will be enough to repeat that appearances are not necessarily illusions and that the conceptions of self, purpose, and the rest, which are so often regarded as ultimate, rest on experiences which are themselves the stuff of reality. On the other hand, as Bradley's analysis implies, it is the refusal to recognize that these are no more than appearances that is responsible for our feelings of frustration and defeat. When we ask for constancy, we find confusion.

But to recognize this fluidity in the self, and to keep it, so to speak, in its place, is to come to rest in the thought of a harmony which is otherwise beyond us. And so we might go on with regard to will, purpose, pleasure, and pain. The more we look upon them as isolated, the more we are disheartened by their disintegrating effects on us. The staff on which we have chosen to lean breaks in our hand. Once we can see them for what they are, separate elements in our apprehension of a whole, and in a collision which ceases as soon as they are taken together, we can expect the balance and satisfaction of those who have attained to be spectators of all time and existence. We shall no longer be distressed, when we think of good, by the reflection that it is tainted by evil. We shall not, indeed, if we continue to use Bradley's vocabulary, comfort ourselves by saying that the evil will disappear and the good will remain, for both are appearances. But when we have recognized this, we shall find ourselves delivered

from the dissatisfactions of which both are the all-too-active causes. It is in the world beyond both good and evil that we reach something that is more than all we know of good in the world of appearance.

BRADLEY'S FAITH AND RELIGIOUS FAITH AKIN

For Bradley, the certainty of all this rests on both demonstration and faith. As we have already seen,¹ Bradley's faith is not faith in a revelation. But the revelation which religion accepts by faith is one which it feels to be coherent with the nature of things, or with a view of the universe without which the believer refuses to live. It is a self-affirmation which consents to live in a world which is capable of a certain interpretation. To the Christian also, as to the idealist, and to Bradley, the world exists for thought in the broad sense of the term. That is, it must be rational; it must make sense; it must fit in with every side of our nature. The world must be rational if it is to be real. True, we are enmeshed in our partial experiences. We cannot be immediately aware of the peace and perfection which flow from a felt harmony. But that does not disturb us. We may, if we prefer to think in terms of time, think of this peace as waiting for us at the end of the journey, or we may think of it as actually around us but obscured from our vision by the film that rests on our human eyesight. And this is the way in which we must think of it if it is real; for if it is real, it is here and now. Reality takes appearance into itself. It lives in appearance, just as, to religion, God is the living God, in whom, here and now, we have our being. Thus the faith which religion demands is the faith which is necessary to a follower of Bradley. Bradley himself would, it seems, deny this. 'Faith is practical, and it is, in short, a making believe; but, *because* it is practical, it is at the same time a making, none the less, as if one did *not*

¹ Chapter 4, p. 85, and Chapter 8, p. 191, *supra*.

believe' (443). It is coloured for him by the inner discrepancy which he finds to pervade the whole field of religion. And there will be not a few readers of Bradley who will be tempted, as Bradley says religion is tempted, to 'dwell too intently on the discord in the world or in the self' (ibid.). But, once we agree that faith, instead of trying to drive two horses that plunge in opposite directions, bears the stamp and image of the unseen, the massiveness of Bradley's conviction and the force of his appeal can be recognized as akin to what religion knows as its own.

REALITY, IF NOT ACTIVE, A CONTRADICTION

Our task has been throughout one of exposition rather than of criticism. But the two can never be wholly disjoined; and in the last two chapters our analysis of Bradley's presentation of the Absolute has led us to think of certain features essential to reality which he leaves unrecognized and unsuspected. To these we must now return. Bradley allows no place in the Absolute for the creative and the redemptive activity essential to the Christian's conception of God. We may put his point more generally: anything of the nature of activity is alien to the Absolute. In the words of Dr. Inge (*Proc. Brit. Acad.* 1946), according to Bradley, 'nothing perfect, nothing genuinely real can move'. In the chapter which Bradley devotes to activity, he correlates activity with passivity, finding the correlation, as we might expect, to involve a mass of contradictions, and postponing further consideration of the subject to his discussion of the self, a discussion which does not really advance us (62-70). Its relevance indeed for the Absolute hardly rises above the horizon. Yet is it possible that an element so prominent in our own experience as activity can have no place in that of the Absolute, 'the unity in which all things, coming together, are transmuted' (488)? We must admit, says Bradley, that

'some appearances really do not appear' (485), yet 'the Absolute is immanent alike through every region of appearances' (487). Granted that our own activities, viewed from above, are chaotic, yet they are not aimless, and even if our aims are unsure and fluctuating, neither life nor experience is conceivable apart from aim; and it would seem the height of irrationality to describe the Absolute in Bradley's terms and yet deny to it either activity or that without which activity as we know it would be impossible. When there is no action, there can be no experience; and reality comes to be riddled by the contradiction that besets the world we live in.

Bradley protests against our calling in an unknown reality to supply the defects of mere intellect or will (484); but he is himself guilty of the very proceeding he forbids to us; and we are left with a reality (if we can still believe in it) in which 'relations of isolation and hostility are affirmed and absorbed' (488), but which neither affirms nor absorbs them itself. If this is so, neither affirmation nor absorption is thinkable. The gap between appearance and reality remains unbridged; and the consolation which is held out to us from the contemplation of a harmony in which all discrepancies are reconciled fades away when that harmony is known to be for ever beyond our reach. It is no comfort to tell us that 'one appearance is more real than another' or that every attitude of experience 'in its own way satisfies, until compared with that which is more than itself' (487). It is useless to assert that 'there are certain modes of experience which satisfy' and that 'in these modes we can repose' (484), if we on our part are denied the possibility of reaching out to them, and if the Absolute on its side can do nothing for us. It may be that reality cannot be identified with will, especially with that thwarted and imperfect will, often the sport of circumstance and chance, that we know as our own. But even a man like ourselves may say, not altogether

with a vain boast, 'I am constant as the northern star', like some 'promontory of rock, tempest-buffed, citadel-crowned'. Surely we do not resort to a 'muddy refuge' (485) if we regard such a will, freed from the last imperfection of human limitations, as part of the experience of the Absolute.

AN ANALOGY FROM PAINTING

We have already attempted, however Bradley might frown on our endeavours, to imagine this gathering up of appearances into one unified experience. An analogy offered itself in the resolution of discordant elements into the massive concord of a musical composition. More satisfactory, as less tied down to the time series, would be a painting. Consider for example such a face as Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*. It is impossible to brood over that 'unfathomable smile', as Pater calls it, without recognizing that she on whose lips it plays has entered into far more experience than could have fallen to the lot of any young woman of her years, even in the tempestuous Italian Renaissance in which she lived. Through the genius of the painter all those experiences have been fused, harmonized, as it were, into one. 'All the thoughts and experience of the world', as a contemporary of Bradley's has written, 'have etched and moulded there, in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the reverie of the middle ages with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits.'³

It is easy to blame Pater for saying too much about that enigmatic countenance. Yet it is the countenance of one who has watched rather than acted, and watched, as Pater hinted, the less worthy aspects of life. To find a more

* ³ Pater, *The Renaissance* (1879), 'Leonardo da Vinci'.

comprehensive example of harmony, in which action as well as contemplation has left its mark, we may turn to that other figure of Leonardo's, the Christ of the Last Supper. Disfigured as it is, on its crumbling walls, by the decay of centuries, it reveals the Saviour at the most tragic moment of his life; it gathers up, for the sympathetic beholder, all the varied emotion of those years of intense and passionate ministration, and ranges beyond them into all the heroism and sacrifice of the humanity into which he entered. It is not the face of one who surveys the pageant of mankind or draws their hopes and fears into his own larger and nobler heart. He it is who for the joy set before him endured the worst that mortal life could give. And such endurance was activity raised to the highest power.

THE SELF-COMMUNICATION OF PERFECTION

This is not the place for an incursion into theology; but it is germane at this point to claim that the Absolute, if it is to be true to Bradley's conclusions, must exhibit what is highest in the human nature we know. 'But that highest', Bradley would doubtless reply, 'is incompatible with the unclouded serenity of the Absolute.' We can only assert once more that such serenity must be inclusive and not exclusive. It will not reject action, purpose, self-sacrifice, love. All these will live in the circle of its perfection. The rejection of their baser parts, the alloy from which they are never wholly free as we know them, leaves them more truly themselves. If the dispiriting results of a world of appearance led us to the certainty of reality, the imperfections of our best hours assure us that what we know in part is somewhere to be known in its completion.

The very argument that Bradley uses so fascinatingly and so relentlessly, to introduce us to an Absolute of which we must affirm 'it is not this; it is not that', till

with Hegel and the Indian mystics we identify being and not-being, carries us on to one who is all that we have admired but could never be, and who, because he is all this, waits to confer it on us. We are thus brought back, by another path, to the conclusion of the previous chapter, that Bradley's Absolute implies the Christian conception of God; that he stopped at the very point where consistency with his own argument would have bidden him advance. It would have been unreasonable to ask that he should have referred to the specifically Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, or that he should have written a chapter on the contribution of theology to his system. To do so would have meant travelling on a path that was as alien to his purpose as it was uncongenial to his interest. Yet, could he have done so, he might have found just the illustration that his readers needed.

SOUL CAN PENETRATE SOUL

Whether or not we regard as an essential of human personality the hidden power to enter into the thoughts and feelings of others in such wise as to affect them and be affected by them, it is undeniable that such a power exists, to varying degrees, in most men and women, if not in all. Bradley recognizes its possibility, but, it must be admitted, without enthusiasm (343 ff.). None of us can say how far his own emotions, his convictions, his likes and dislikes are influenced and even actually formed not only by the general consensus of the society in which he lives, but by the emotions and assumptions of those with whom he is habitually in contact. If each of us receives from the outside what may be considered the greater part of himself, consciously or unconsciously, he also gives. With some, this may be the effect of living and moving in a very restricted circle; with others, the mind or soul is open to the most diverse currents that flow in the ocean of human intercourse. There are some—the world's

greater poets and more conspicuous leaders will at once occur to the thought—who have gathered those currents into a tide which has swept through the lives of multitudes and has shaped the movement of other ages than their own. Such indeed is the true characteristic of human greatness, either for good or evil. Few would seriously deny that such greatness is seen pre-eminently in Jesus Christ, both in the fragmentary records of his life as we have them in the Gospels, and in the subsequent history of Christendom. There we find an outstanding and unique example of an experience (still to use Bradley's term) which unifies all the imperfect and limited experiences of mankind, not only exhibiting them in their highest forms, but combining them into a single pattern.

We are not merely conscious, when we contemplate his activity, of levels of courage, gentleness, wisdom, self-assertion, and self-abnegation, which by their very completeness explain the nature of what struggles, falls, and rises in our own lives. We can see how these various excellences pass outside themselves, as it were, and fuse themselves into one all-embracing excellence; not a mixture of virtues, but their combination. We cannot be satisfied to describe Jesus as a great figure who was at once remarkably wise, gracious, heroic, and who joined all that we recognize as separate excellences, like the colours of the spectrum, into one radiant brilliance. This does not exhaust the significance of the Incarnation—just as to Bradley the Absolute is, in detail, unintelligible (559). But it does at least explain to some extent how Christ was 'truly man'; all the traits of mankind which in us are imperfect and inchoate, possessing only degrees of reality, are seen as perfect and complete in him; his 'general character comes as a consequence from a necessary principle' (ibid.).

The Christian theologian, however, does not stop here.

If Christ was 'truly man', he was 'truly God'. Whatever else this means, it must mean that the summation, the gathering up of all the scattered elements, the unravelled threads of human life and thought, into one pattern is what we must look for in that supreme life and activity which we call God. Christian thought, when it dares to gaze upon the infinite, cannot be content with an '*o altitudo*'. It refuses to think of God as something altogether different from man. If it were to do this, the Incarnation would become completely unintelligible. We come to know God through Christ. 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' It is in God, whom we thus behold in the light of the incarnate Christ, that we can see our imperfection transmuted into a single perfection; the incoherence of our impressions, our wills, our very 'privation and ignorance' (559) growing into one transcendent harmony. We have passed from appearance to reality.

In reality, or the Absolute, so understood, appearances are neither lost or merged. We do not cease to be ourselves when we find our home, as it were, in God. True, we are freed from the succession of changing, vanishing, and (as Bradley would say) unreal selves of whose fluctuations we are more conscious than of the states or selves that fluctuate; but with the possibility of this approach to reality, or of entering on these degrees of reality, we are already acquainted, theoretically and practically. The perfect manhood of Christ meant that he received from us as well as gave to us; that he shared life with us. In the same way, the thought of God, the Absolute and the real, is the thought of unity in diversity and inseparable from it, a harmony in which there is a place for all that constitutes our true being, the fulfilment of all our aspirations.

Such a view, moreover, should enable us to deal with the subject of will and purpose and thought, which

occasions so much perplexity in Bradley's pages. We cannot find a place, Bradley urges, for any of them in reality, because they are linked to imperfection and disharmony. They are not illusions; but they are appearances; and we have therefore been driven to conceive of the Absolute as something static, immobile, and, as such, lacking in what is essential in our own consciousness either of experience or life. The real has thus become the supremely unreal. But it cannot escape notice that Bradley considers only one aspect of our experience of will and of thought. He regards these, not as they are in our own experience, but as they come to be in our consciousness of clashing circumstances and opposing desires. This is, however, to stop short before reaching the heart of the matter. Will itself is independent of those discordant purposes and wishes, either in myself or in others, which dishearten me into imagining it as something doomed to failure and therefore as unreal. It is properly, like faith, an affirmation of my being. The conditions of my existence, the limitations of my knowledge and experience may baffle me and destroy my assurance and lead me to change my object; but this fact does not change the essential nature of will; it rather forces me to do with will what I have been bidden to do with experience; to find, perfectly formed within the Absolute, what in myself I find imperfect indeed but indispensable.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF EVIL IN THE GOOD LIFE

In this way another barrier between the philosopher's Absolute and the Christian's God is removed. But not, it will be said, the most formidable of all. Can we believe that which is evil in us has its place in God? We have given due weight to the difficulty of thinking of evil either as an abstraction or as an independent existence; we have noticed the admixture of evil and good, or what with our varying judgements we call such, both in the world of

nature and in human conduct; and we have come to the conclusion that to theist and non-theist alike evil is something that we dislike or that we are bound to get rid of, and that, to the theist, evil is something that is placed where it is in order that we may know the experience of deliverance from it. We have watched the transformation of evil when it is taken out of its isolation and set in the pattern of the whole. But does this help us, if we are to think of every element in our experience, however deplorable or shocking, as gathered up, at least partially, into the experience of the best men, and entirely into that of Christ and therefore of his Father? Does this mean that, by the side of gentleness, courage, purity, and selflessness, we must set greed, lust, cowardice, and hate? The very question savours of blasphemy. It was comparatively easy for Bradley to float past the submerged rock, and to say that both evil and good, as appearances, would somehow be transformed in the Absolute; nor did Bradley appear, however seriously he wished us to deal with the Absolute, to be greatly concerned for its moral character. The atmosphere is changed when we pass from the Absolute to one whom we conceive as absolute perfection. We can no longer take refuge in a 'some-how'.

Yet, when we consider the nobler men and women known to us, we are not seldom startled to find the depth of their consciousness of sin, and the clearness of their understanding of the mind of the sinner. The former, indeed, often seems to be little more than the consciousness (horrible enough to a pure soul) of temptation, or of the commission of acts which less sensitive consciences might think of as trivial; but the latter suggests something more mysterious, the sharing of the wickedness of others; the sense of the degradation caused by the sins of others as if it were their own, leading to the expression of penitence, entirely genuine, for sins which they had never

committed, and to a feeling of corporate guilt which has perhaps found its fullest literary expression in the sentiment which Dostoevski puts into the mouth of the dying Abbot Zossima in *The Brothers Karamazov*. And no great writer has given to the world more searching analyses of the complexity and the depths in the mind of a great sinner. Dostoevski, indeed, is penetrated with the peculiar Russian mysticism which lends so startling and so disturbing a poignancy to the conception that no man's guilt, or innocence, is merely his own. We are not simply our brothers' keepers, and therefore responsible to some degree for their misdeeds. Their misdeeds are also our own. But Christian meditation on the cross of Christ has pointed the way to the *arcanum* of the accusing conscience. We ourselves hammered in the nails and thrust the spear. We share not only the guilt of others, but their sin. In our own day, we have expected and we have heard the confession of the least guilty members of a wicked nation in their part in the villainy of him who, like another Jeroboam, made the whole people to sin; and it would be sheer Pharisaism to pretend that we in this country were free of responsibility for the indolence and love of material well-being which opened up Hitler's path to tyranny and frightfulness.

This, it will be replied, is no great matter. We are all sinners; the saint himself is smirched with the common taint. It gives us no help to extend that taint to one whom we think of as truly man, and yet hold to be one with God. But this is to misstate the case. In one of the most startling sentences of the New Testament, Christ, who is elsewhere represented as tempted like us, and bearing our diseases and our sins, yet without sin, is said to have been made sin for us, that we might be made in him the righteousness of God. Whatever the full significance of these daring words, they cannot mean less than that Christ entered into our worst and most shameful experiences. He did

not simply contemplate them from the outside. He was no 'plaster saint'. He knew the evil will, the murderous hate, the lustful desire; and by that very knowledge he transformed it all in himself and transforms it in us. Poisonous while isolated and in itself, it becomes, when duly received as an ingredient in that heavenly alchemy, an element that serves the ends not of death, but of life. Bradley has forbidden us to look forward to understanding how the various experiences in the world of appearance are harmonized in the one experience of reality; and he cannot rebuke us if we figure the possibility of sin being thus made an instrument of righteousness by being borne or carried by innocence.

But if we affirm this, we are not left to add that we cannot see how it is done; for we are aware in the first place of the mutual sharing of experience among human beings, even if we think of them only as finite centres; secondly, of the communication of experiences and emotions, likes and dislikes, approbations and condemnations, which is the essential of all human society; thirdly, with the purifying of what otherwise might respond to temptation, by a strong and organized ideal of life; and fourthly, with the special power over others possessed by sympathy with human failures and derelicts, joined to a resolute will for their deliverance.

Here then we can see how the process of harmonization actually takes place; not only, as earlier on, when the evil in the world is placed in the pattern alongside the good, but when sin is set by the side of holiness; the real transforms the unreal and draws it into itself. Once more, the Christian faith is seen to fill the gap which Bradley was forced to leave open. If we can assume that Christ's was the fully integrated experience, we can see how what is evil in us, as well as what we can admire and approve of, had its place in him.

AND IN GOD

But what will be the result when we transfer our argument to the Absolute? We have agreed that if we are to attempt to understand the Absolute, we must think of it, or him, as endowed with the attributes of the God of the Christian faith, creative and redemptive, beyond us and yet in us, and, in his own experience, including all that is essential in ours, will, patience, love, and all that constitutes personality. But to think of all this in ourselves is to be equally aware of its opposite, cruelty, carelessness, caprice. Does it not follow that an all-comprehending experience must be inconsistent with moral perfection? In reply, it can hardly be satisfactory to say that the evil that horrifies us in this world of appearance, and the good that cludes us, are both transformed out of recognition. If we are driven to think of the Absolute, to any extent, in terms of the Christian's God, we cannot dismiss goodness from his experience; and if we must think of God in terms of Bradley's Absolute, gathering up all our experiences into his, we can hardly dismiss evil.

The dilemma is less serious if we keep the significance of the Incarnation in mind. We can see, though in a glass darkly, how what we call evil has its place in God. Not that we can conceive of him as tempted, as struggling against a relentless foe, or (as was said of Christ) as being made perfect through suffering. Yet, if we think of him, not as a person, distinct from all his creatures, but as the life which lives in them all, we cannot deny to him that which in his creatures we deplore and even detest. We do not seek for relief in saying that evil does not exist for us, that it is only negative, or appearance, and that therefore it cannot exist for him; as little could we argue that since evil cannot exist for his perfect goodness, it cannot exist for us. But that view of our experiences, as incoherent and clashing, which Bradley has forced upon us,

enables us to observe the difference between our own desires for satisfaction and peace on the one hand, and their frustration through our own and others' ignorance; and, on the other, the transformation of desire in a world of harmony. It is in this opposition to others, from which we cannot escape, that all which we recognize as sin has its birth; the passion to clutch the possessions and enjoy the pleasures that others would deny us or snatch from us, and the vicious reactions against those whom we see standing in our way. The longer this process lasts, the fiercer do our reactions become and the more degraded the satisfactions we pursue, till there is no brutality of which human nature does not seem capable.

Now, in the Absolute, there are—and surely there must be—these desires for satisfaction; without them, experience is unmeaning. But in the Absolute, and in God, as the Christian knows him, there is no clash or collision. Hence, the evil effects and the vicious character of these desires, universal to a greater or less degree here, will be wholly absent. And if we can go on to think of the Absolute as creative and redemptive, we cannot refuse to him that penetrating sympathy with what is evil in us, to which we have already been led in the portrait of Christ—that bearing of our sin which was the exalted function of the incarnate word; and the divine purpose that the sons of men should share with him the highest satisfaction of being brought into the one harmonious experience that he enjoys.

It would be going too far to say, with the 'eminent English positivist' quoted by Martineau⁴ that 'you cannot make the slightest concession to metaphysics without ending in a theology'; but it would at least appear that to yield ourselves to Bradley's guidance in metaphysics is to find ourselves on a path where Christian theology alone can lead us to an assured resting-place.

⁴ *Study of Religion* (1889), Vol. I, p. 12

CHAPTER ELEVEN

EPILOGUE

THE PRESENT CONFUSION

TODAY, Bradley's world has come to an end. The questions which he and his contemporaries asked have been answered or laid aside as unanswerable or irrelevant. The age which was beginning to shape itself before our eyes when Bradley passed from us has not only brought new and bewildering changes—all ages do that; its shape is such that the changes themselves are of a different type from those which have made history in the past. They will need a new orientation, if we are to deal with them as bygone generations have dealt with their own problems.

Politically, the world exhibits an entirely new and probably quite unstable grouping, in which the old connexions and loyalties have disappeared and no group, no individual, knows who is his friend, nor who can be relied on to maintain the order in which he has grown up. Science has put man's wildest dreams to shame; it has placed in our prentice and uncertain hands such power that we do not know whether to think of the world into which it offers to lead us as a paradise, or a valley of dry bones or of Hinnom. It may liberate; it seems much more likely to enslave, or to destroy. But science has planted itself firmly in the seat of authority which religion was wont more modestly to occupy. For the belief in a settled order and purpose in the universe, resting ultimately on a divine being which, however veiled from our eyes, intended the well-being and salvation of men, we have had to substitute a trembling confidence in laws of nature, whose origin we cannot guess, and whose working constantly baffles us. Unlike the faith of religion, such a

confidence cannot be the ally or the friend of reason. Uncertainty in the realms of spirit, politics, nature, leaves us with nothing but irrationality. Truth becomes that which seems least unlikely to give us what we want. The age, like the last age of Greek religion, has 'lost its nerve'. There is nothing to fight for, and no convictions with which to fight for it. Freedom is impossible in a scene given up to rival dictators. There are no more categorical imperatives, save those that are imposed by force. Man can neither be a law-giver nor a law-obeyer. Gone are

*our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.*

NOT UNKNOWN TILL NOW

But we must not exaggerate, or allow ourselves to be carried toward Niagara. The very lines just quoted remind us that fears like our own were expressed a century and a half ago. In every age men have felt, as we do, that the changes are of an unprecedented character; and the disturbances which have shaken what seemed the stabilities of politics or law or faith have had one and the same result. They have driven the more thoughtful back to the world of the unseen, the meaning of existence, the purpose of life; and whether they have satisfied themselves or not, the result has been a certain poise in their dealing with the insistent problems of the world of the seen, which has somehow kept men in the saddle and prevented them from being ridden by things. For these are the questions, as we reflected at the beginning of our journey, that dominate us: What am I? Why am I here? What is the real world in which I am placed? And the whole course of philosophy has shown that it is more important to ask the questions seriously than to expect to find answers that will satisfy us all.

Yet no one will ask questions seriously unless he has

some hope of finding a satisfactory answer; and the outstanding characteristic of our age is not, in spite of what has just been said, the difficulty of finding answers but the imperative necessity of searching for them. What science has done is to convince us that if we do not succeed in finding some answers, we shall be swept from our feet. The danger was present to Bradley; it was present to Plato. In every century there has been raised the cry, 'tis the last hour'. Why should we suppose that for our own days has been reserved the exhaustion of human resources?

This book has been written in the belief that the type of answer which Bradley gave has a profound relevance for our own situation. That answer has been expounded; its limitations have been pointed out; its significance, in view of philosophy and religion alike, has been recognized. All that is left is to ask, in the face of the foregoing study, what Bradley has done for us as we set ourselves to cope with our own world. We can best do this, not by summarizing each chapter of the book, but by referring briefly to the salient points of Bradley's system, the peaks in the chain of his argument, aware, as we have found reason to be, that there may be other ranges hid from his vision, yet not without their power over the landscape that he surveyed.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE ABSOLUTE WITHIN US

In the first place, every chapter has reminded us afresh that life must be looked on as one whole. Everything must be seen, felt, estimated, in relation to everything else. Admirers of General Smuts will often have recalled his *Holism as a System of Evolution*, published just after Bradley's death. Bradley had no enthusiasm for evolution, in Smuts's sense or any other. But he knew—none better—that to appreciate the present we must remember that it emerges from the past and slides every moment into the

future. Every perplexity and disappointment, whether psychological, physical, or moral, rises from our unwillingness or our inability to do this. The faulty hypothesis that calls for a wider or more patient view of the field, the failure that dispirits our eager anticipations of swift achievement, should remind us that there are other resources and results to be taken into account. History refuses to pronounce its verdict on any age which we cut off from the rest. Beauty and goodness can never be caught on the wing. Neither error nor weeping nor wickedness will do more than linger with us for a night. We are conscious of limits all around us; but we are driven in thought to a whole, an Absolute, for which there can be no limits, and therefore no frustration, no uncertainty, and no distress.

Moreover, the foundation, the essential of this Absolute, is experience, which, in its rudiments, we know as our own. And our experience is bound up with desire and will, happiness and success, grief and failure. It is more real than what we call ourselves. We only know our experiences. The Absolute, reality, is experience; all the experience, so to speak, that there is. And it is important to bear in mind that experience alone is real. This is not to say that thought is more real than thing or mind than matter. The only contrast that there is is between our experience, which is limited, imperfect, deluded, and the perfect full-orbed experience of the Absolute. Into this, our own experience is to be transformed. For an unlimited experience, Bradley argues, there can be no change; neither purpose nor struggle, defeat or victory. Now, if this is true, it at once sets an unbridgeable gulf between the Absolute and ourselves. Experience is to us inconceivable without change and effort, failure and success. We cannot indeed predicate failure of the Absolute. That would be not far from a contradiction in terms. But if, in Bradley's spirit, though not in his

language, we recognize our own failure as the result of our limitation (and we can do nothing else), we can surely see that as the limiting boundaries are removed or overpassed, the failure and pang of defeat will be left behind, while all that properly belongs to our experience, including thought and will, is part of the Absolute. Experience in fact is the Absolute within us. And this reaches the knowledge or the vision of the mystic, though by a path that the mystic has seldom trodden.

In this achievement of recognizing the whole of experience as the Absolute, says Bradley, lies complete and perfect satisfaction, 'the general good of man'. Bradley, we must admit, has not made clear whether this satisfaction resides in the Absolute's experience or in our own conviction that there is such a thing, and that it alone is real. But this antithesis, though sharp enough on the face of it, should not be pressed. The same apparent antithesis is offered by what the Christian calls the peace of God; the peace enjoyed by God who is blessed for evermore and sees all things robed in the light which was his first creation, but also the working of that conception within our own minds, which lifts us, in the conflicts of this earthly existence, above the battle, and makes us 'more than conquerors'. Thus once more the satisfaction which is inseparable from the Absolute irradiates our own experience as being the experience of the Absolute; the experience which is itself the Absolute is formed within us.

This is not Stoicism; for, however convinced the Stoic might be that the universe was a great organism, of which the soul was inspired by wisdom and benevolence, he stood on his own feet. He was the servant and even the equal of his master. Still less is it the nihilism of the East. It is not renunciation of life. It is not the flight of the alone to the alone. On the contrary, peace is only possible when the whole universe is accepted; harmony is only enjoyed when all the notes, so discordant and agonizing

when only a few are detected by our ears, are joined in the great diapason.

It would be equally mistaken to equate this satisfaction with some form of eudaemonism. It is not an end that can be reached by means of any kind, acquisitiveness or persistence, wisdom or virtue. There are many who would criticize it for this very reason. „*L'homme moyen sensuel* will never understand that the end of life is nothing but life. Yet to deny this, and to aim at some further end, is to be enslaved by the means we take; and thus the means can never lead to the satisfaction that they are expected to bestow. 'What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' But closer introspection will show that the real end of our desire is not an object, however attractive, nor a feeling, however pleasurable, but mental rest in a state of being. To be satisfied is to have reached an experience which we do not desire to be changed, even if the experience is itself a course of activity; and indeed it can be nothing else; it is the activity which knows no limitation of weariness or surfeit; the experience of the Absolute, in fact, to enter into which is the goal of our being.

Through all this there runs a curious suggestion or echo of Christian belief, especially as it is met with in the Fourth Gospel. It is not simply the faith, as Bradley has described it more than once, in the attainability of what gives no signs of being attainable. It is the conviction of kinship between ourselves and the universe. But why should we find satisfaction in the harmony of the universe? And how do we know that the universe is harmonious? Why may not the clashes and jolts which we perceive in the tiny province of the universe known to us extend to the farthest stars, or to whatever experience is conscious of them? And even if it does not, why should the recognition of that order bring peace to our own distracted and greedy minds? Bradley could not have asserted that it would,

save for a belief in something like the ancient words, 'Thou hast made us for thyself, and we can find no rest until we find it in thee.' If there is a difference, it is only that Bradley went farther than most of Augustine's followers suppose Augustine to have gone, and clung to the thought not merely of a beneficent creator but of a vast living 'economy' in which existence and blessedness were inevitably and essentially one.

THE REASONS OF THE HEART

We have commented more than once in the preceding chapters on the fashion in which Bradley links 'may' and 'must', in his argument that the Absolute must exist. In one who dismissed so bluntly the traditional proofs for the existence of God, this naturally causes surprise. 'If we need it—the existence of the Absolute—and there is nothing against it, it must be.' But this need, in the first place, is not a capricious demand, like that of future happiness, or even the supposedly universal longing for the survival of death. It is the demand, Bradley maintains, of the most vigorous processes of our own thought. It is the cry of the deepest longing in our being; withhold it, set it down as unproven and therefore to be treated as false, and our whole world, intellectual and spiritual, falls into ruin. This Bradley refuses to contemplate. He calls us indeed to a *salto mortale*; yet could any other proof be more convincing? Could any other proof be convincing at all? It is on this ground alone that men believe in God. No one has ever been led to faith by a syllogism. 'The heart has its reasons of which the head knows nothing.' Pascal was not thinking of the merely emotional. The heart to him was the heart as the Hebrew and the Jew understood it; the inner shrine where intellect and emotion and instinct and love meet together and are one. Among all the idealists, Bradley surely may be given the title of defender of the faith.

THE GAP BETWEEN THE ABSOLUTE AND GOD NOT FINAL

Bradley's refusal to lessen the gap between the Absolute and God has been already discussed at length. Yet a few words on the subject must be added. A deliberate statement of the grounds for this refusal by those who have made it or implied it is rare in the history of philosophy. The more usual practice, as we have observed, has been to elaborate a philosophic conception of the *ens realissimum*, and then, so to speak, to carry God over into it, without pausing to consider whether all that gives religious value to God is not lost in the process. Nor can it be said that those who, like some of the mystics, have recognized the distinction, or the modern 'finitists' of whom Professor E. S. Brightman can be taken as typical, have been influenced by arguments such as Bradley's. From Bradley's statement of the matter in *Appearance and Reality*—he is far from expounding it in *Ethical Studies*—it is hard to escape the conclusion, however unwelcome, that to neglect the difference would 'ruin' both God and the Absolute. The theist has generally been content to minimize evil rather than to attempt to reconcile its existence, on any scale, large or small, with supreme power and love; or he has accepted the limitation of the infinite but has defended it as being self-limitation. This, however, does not escape the contradiction, nor the results which contradiction will always bring with it. He may therefore be grateful to Bradley, at least for startling us out of our acquiescence. He has left us in a strait which is intolerable to religion. But he has also, if our own argument holds good, pointed to the way out. He has indeed stopped too soon. He has failed to do justice, not so much to God, as to the Absolute. Claiming that the Absolute is the sum of all possible experience, he has denied to it certain elements which are essential to the experience of finite centres as to that of God, either as the theist or the

Christian understands God, or as he himself describes God. True, our experience is limited; but these elements are not the result of limitation; without them, there could be no experience at all. What we call evil, as both Bradley and his theistic critics would admit, is the result of limitation. To regard the Absolute as beyond the limitations of finite centres, but not beyond the essentials of their experience, is to find a place in him for all that Bradley allows to us and to God; but denies to the Absolute; the ground for the distinction disappears; and we can think of God as being everything in everything.

THE RELATEDNESS OF THE ABSOLUTE

We have spoken of interpreting the Absolute in a larger sense than did Bradley. We have doubted whether Bradley went far enough. And at the end of *Appearance and Reality* the reader finds himself wondering whether he is not left with a contradiction in more than terms. Logically and metaphysically the Absolute appears to stand over against the relative. The relative is not related simply to other relatives, but to the Absolute; and therefore the Absolute to the relative. But if the Absolute is the all, the individual must be part of it; he cannot be in relation to it, even though the relation is only what Bradley calls an external one. Yet either to maintain or deny this relationship would seem to 'ruin' both sides of it. The relative must be in and yet outside the Absolute. And if the Absolute is to be thus regarded, we shall need some other Absolute, some third being, to contain them both.

But does this follow? Is it necessary to think of the Absolute as related to the relative as relatives are related to each other? Is it even possible to think of the infinite as related to, and therefore in some way distinct from, the finite? If Bradley appears to affirm this, or to assume it, he also implies its denial. We have referred to Mr.

Church's analogy of cell-fission. If now we further contemplate the cells in an organism, we observe them arranged in smaller and larger groups; each group has an activity, a function, and even an initiative of its own; and the same is true of each cell; but always, unless some cancer-like disease breaks out, in harmony with the rest. We are reminded of bees within the hive. And if each group and each cell has its own life, so has the whole organism. But while the organism, the groups, and the cells, can be considered and studied apart, the life of the one is not distinct from the life of the rest. Both organism and individual cell can be said to feed and to reproduce itself. What we cannot do is to assert of the one what is denied to the other. If we could use the term 'experience' in this context, we should have to say that the experience of the organism is far wider than that of the cells, but not different in kind, whether in regard of harmonious activity, resistance to opposition, or recovery of normality. We may carry this over into the sphere of human relationships, more particularly the family where these relationships are closest. The family is not greater than the sum of its members; nor is it the sum of its members and nothing more; but the experiences of each member are shared and completed in those of the rest; and the more they are thus embraced by the rest, the more fully they achieve and preserve their own individuality. With this in mind, we can face the paradox of religion with less misgiving. To rest in the thought of God as the all, the Absolute, does not destroy the sense of our own being, as 'finite centres', any more than the organism 'ruins' the activity of the cell or the cell group.

The Christian will still think of God as his Father; that is, his own experiences of need for guidance and support, and of joy in obeying and co-operating, will be followed by the experience of a response; the hand which he stretches out he finds to be grasped by the hand of

another; that is to say, he is conscious of another being who is in a relation to him that he can best call paternal. But this request and response, this give and take, soon proves to be transcending itself. It is mutual. The two experiences are really one. What he is conscious of is a systole-diastole; the movement of something like that which, in the organism, supplies every part. He has not passed from one side of the dividing line between Absolute and relative to the other. He has begun to understand that there is no dividing line at all; that the Absolute is not related to the relative; but that what he imagined the relative to be is only the Absolute as yet not fully understood or felt. It may be impossible to pass beyond what is meant by the Christian's filling up of the sufferings of Christ, or having the joy of Christ fulfilled in himself. What he will hold to is that the Absolute embraces but does not annihilate the relative; and that the infinite, so far from being of purer eyes than to behold the finite, gathers into itself all the experiences of the finite—struggle, misdirection, failure. It experiences all the limitations of the finite, while it knows them to be limitations. The Christian might find the supreme example of this in the cry of dereliction uttered on the cross (Mark 15³⁴, quoted from Psalm 22¹); and what begins by seeming a paradox becomes the *lex essendi*.

THE DEUS ABSCONDITUS

We may hope that this sketch of an interpretation of religion within the bounds of idealism will throw light on the experience of many Christians. But it will certainly arouse in some quarters a determined opposition, and that for a reason which has not hitherto appeared in our discussions, but which in these closing paragraphs cannot well be overlooked. Against the infinity of God, into which our finite is to be gathered up, stands what many will regard as the only genuine Christian view; that God

is the *Deus absconditus*, the hidden God whom man can by no industry of searching hope to discover. Nor is this inability simply due, it is urged, to man's weakness or limitation, but to the positive alienation of his will; the sin, the refusal to obey, which lies at the heart of man's spiritual and moral paralysis. A conversion, a radical change is needed; and only then will God cease to be the veiled mystery or the declared and wrathful foe. Such, it is argued, is the essential Christian message, as proclaimed by Paul and Augustine, by Luther and Pascal, and in more modern times by the great evangelicals, and by Kierkegaard and Karl Barth. The impassable gulf is not between the Absolute and the relative, reality and appearance, but between God, limited on his side by man's opposition, and man, limited on his, by God's alienation. This, we must notice, is not an argument specifically against Bradley; it challenges the whole *Weltanschauung* of idealism; it is equally an argument against what is known as the *philosophia perennis* as it is found alike in Thomism, the Cambridge Platonists, and modern social Christianity. It has been no part of the plan of this book to deal with so far-reaching a contention; yet we may perhaps not unfairly claim that every chapter has thrown light on what is involved in it; and it leads to a consideration with which our study of Bradley's idealism may well draw to a close.

We are bidden, then, to think of the *Deus absconditus* as dwelling, to use an Old Testament phrase, in heaven, while the children of men are on earth, and facing mankind as in one of the world's greatest poems he is made to face Job, a riddle and an enigma, an adversary and a tyrant, with his implacable 'thou canst not know me'. He is in that case as far from the infinite as is Bradley's God; and still worse, it is man's ignorance and defiance which has reduced him to a finitude like that of man. On the other hand, let us suppose that he is the Absolute

in the larger sense such as we have tried to conceive, conscious of all the elements that are essential to man's experiences; and that man's ignorance and sin alike are the result of his moving about in a universe of which he only knows a part, and to whose all-pervading harmony he can only advance through contradictions, even though those contradictions are meant to be finally resolved. Then it will surely follow that such a God, one with the Absolute, is not a God who hides but who reveals himself. His word to man, to repeat a phrase equally dear to Augustine and to Pascal, is 'Thou couldest not be seeking me, hadst thou not found me.'

THE ANALOGIA PATRIS

All this means that we must pass from the *analogia entis* to what may be called the *analogia patris*, the comprehension of God in terms of fatherhood. But if we interpret the *ens*, with Bradley, as the whole of experience which we only know in part, we are driven on to find in it those very characters which we discover in what we begin by calling fatherhood and end by recognizing as the love, creative, quickening and redemptive, which is inseparable alike from life, and from reality; active in the worm within its clod as in the co-ordinated movements of the shining orbs of the heavens. To such an infinite being we may not unfitly apply the term father; but the analogy breaks down, as it does, in fact, in the New Testament itself; for the father, as a term of human kinship, is both relative to the son and distinct from the son; they share a common home, which includes them both. In the Absolute are all the characteristics, the experiences, which mark both fatherhood and sonship. To the Christian, the Father and the Son are 'one thing', and those who through the Son themselves become sons are 'one thing' in the Son and the Father (John 17²¹). Worship, adoration and love will remain, and will deepen as their object is known

and felt to be the all-embracing Godhead which gathers his sons into himself. It is natural for us to think more of the protection, the benevolence, the governance, which are contained in that complex. As we advance from the lower to the higher degree of reality, toward the point where we can pass beyond the boundaries of qualities and relationship, we can experience what we know as the response of sonship and the response of fatherhood alike. We find ourselves in the universe where all advances and all responses are blended together.

To those who have so learned to think of reality, in which being and becoming are no longer two but one, sin will not seem of less importance than it did to Luther before his conversion or to Pascal after his; it will not only be limitation; it will be the limitation of the disordered mind that refuses emancipation from the half to the whole; but it will be, as to the Christian it already is, a beaten foe, because the experience which wrestled with that limitation in its most menacing and hostile force, and tore it apart, is enshrined in the Absolute—is set, as it were, in the heart and centre of reality.

We began this chapter by wondering whether the fierce and cruel tensions of our own day have not whirled us beyond the calmer regions of Bradley's idealism; we may close it with the surmise that the faith formed on such a view of the universe as his and carried forward to a region which he hesitated to tread, can both withstand the assaults of the present evil world, and enable us to understand the prayer—surely, on the lips of him who uttered it, more than a prayer—that they who hold it may be one thing with God.

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